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57
RECIPES
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BAKING ALONG THE *DANUBE RIVER*

Hungarian Pastry
Slovakian Cookies
German Strudel
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page 82

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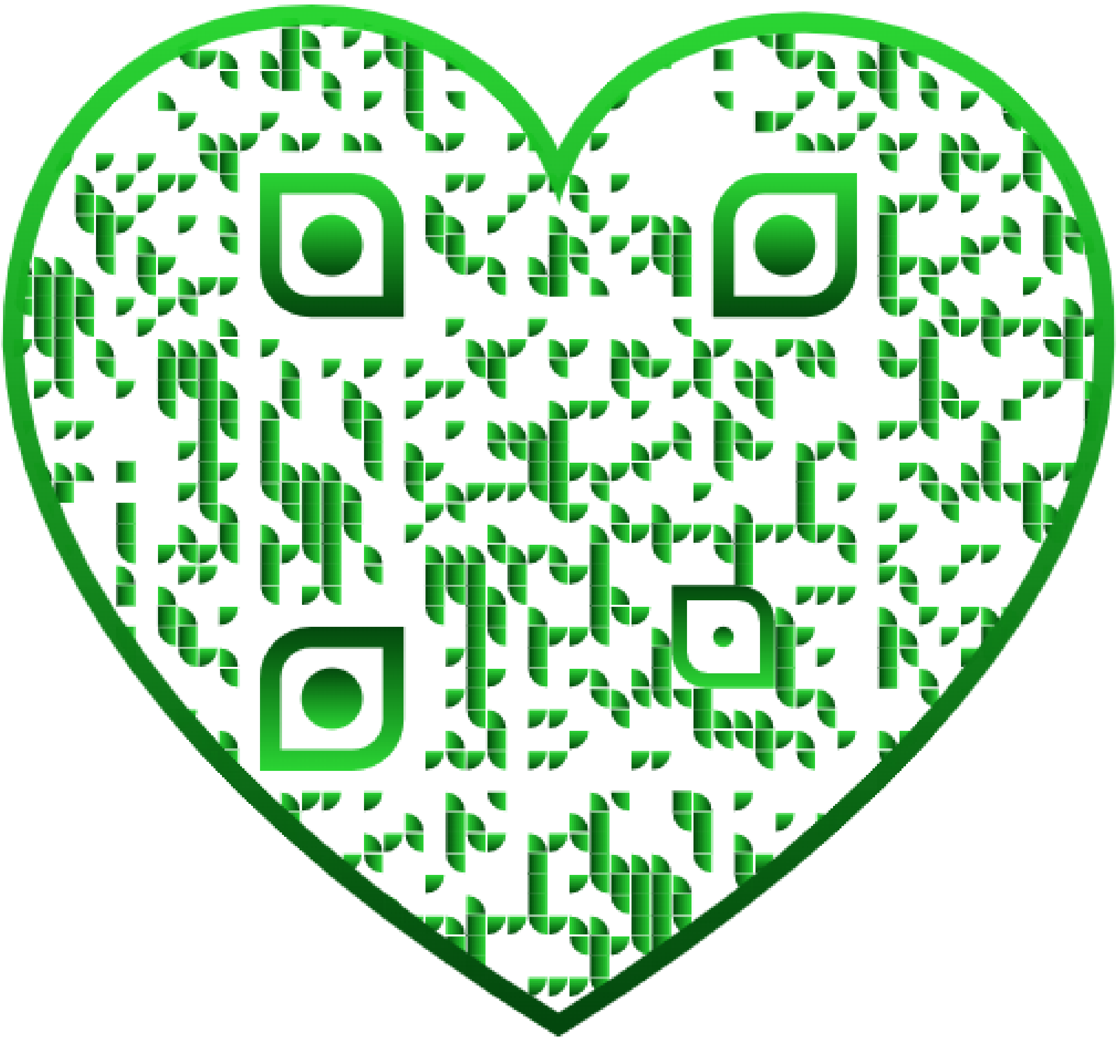

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AMANDA STABILE
FOOD AND PROP STYLING BY
KATIE MOON DICKERSON

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Setting Sail for a Sensational Summer

As we continue celebrating our decade-long journey here at *Bake from Scratch*, this issue encapsulates so many remarkable stories, recipes, and discoveries that honor the global baking community. And, of course, we've included a selection of delectable recipes that will have you rushing to your farmers' market to savor the fresh flavors of the season!

I've often said that *Bake from Scratch* was never inspired by the need for more recipes but by the people, places, and flavors that make the world of baking so uniquely special. A few months ago, I had the privilege of flying to West Hartford, Connecticut, to visit Small State Provisions. This was more than just a visit to a celebrated bakery; it was a reunion with my friend and former colleague Kevin Masse. Our story began with a mix-up in a cookbook order, followed by an Instagram post of a sprinkle-studded loaf cake, and a baking connection that led to years of collaboration before Kevin took the bold step of starting his own bakery business. The moment I entered Small State Provisions, I saw the pride in Kevin's eyes, and I felt immense joy seeing how his passion for baking has evolved into a thriving business. Kevin even baked his famous Blueberry-Oat Scones for me, and he's graciously sharing the recipe with us on page 65.

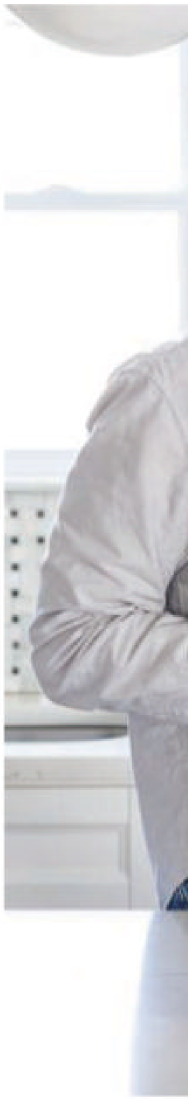
You might already be familiar with *Bake from Scratch* recipe developer Amanda Stabile from our Monday night Baking School, our test kitchen baking retreats, and her amazing recipes featured in each issue. But now, you get a glimpse into the source of her passion for baking. Last year, Amanda embarked on a heartfelt journey to translate, organize, and celebrate her great-grandmother's treasured recipes, ultimately publishing a book for her family. When she shared her result with me, I was moved to tears, and I knew you would want to hear about this sentimental creation that honors her family and ensures these recipes will be passed down for generations to come. Read all about her project on page 31.

If you know me well, you also know that there's nothing quite like the thrill of a delicious journey to explore the baking traditions of the world—preferably in style. Join me on page 71 as I recount my five-star journey aboard Uniworld's S.S. *Maria Theresa* for a four-country exploration along the Danube River. From Passau, Germany, to Budapest, Hungary, I tasted my way through iconic treats like chimney cakes in Hungary, poppy seed-filled cookies in Slovakia, the famous Linzer and Sacher tortes and loads of viennoiserie throughout Austria, and so much more. It was the perfect way to experience this storied region, and I'm excited to return in August with a group of fellow baking enthusiasts. If you're interested in joining a river cruise baking retreat, email me at heybrian@bakefromscratch.com and let me know where you'd like to go next.

Preheat your oven; it's time to bake!

Brian

Brian Hart Hoffman
Editor-in-Chief



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1½ tablespoons (21 grams) olive oil
1 teaspoon (5 grams) apple cider vinegar
2¾ cups (343 grams) Caputo Gluten Free Flour, plus more for dusting
2½ teaspoons (7.5 grams) kosher salt
2¼ teaspoons (7 grams) Caputo Lievito Dry Yeast
1½ teaspoons (6 grams) granulated sugar
Herbed olive oil, to serve

1. In the bowl of a stand mixer, whisk together 1¼ cups (300 grams) warm water, oil, and vinegar by hand. Fit mixer with the paddle attachment.
2. In a medium bowl, whisk together Caputo Gluten Free Flour, salt, Caputo Lievito Dry Yeast, and sugar. With mixer on low speed, gradually add flour mixture to oil mixture, beating until combined, about 1 minute. Increase mixer speed to medium, and beat for 5 minutes, stopping to scrape paddle and bottom and sides of bowl. (After 5 minutes, dough will still be very soft but should hold together when scraped into a ball.) Cover dough, and let stand for 20 minutes.
3. Spray a rimmed baking sheet with cooking spray.
4. Heavily dust a work surface with Caputo Gluten Free Flour. Turn out dough onto prepared surface, and heavily flour top of dough. Pat dough into a 9x6-inch rectangle. Using a sharp knife, cut dough into 6 (3-inch) squares. Place on prepared pan. Cover and let rise in a warm, draft-free place (75°F/24°C) until puffed, about 30 minutes.
5. Position oven rack in top third of oven. Preheat oven to 500°F (260°C).
6. Bake until lightly browned and an instant-read thermometer inserted in center registers at least 210°F (99°C), 20 to 25 minutes. (See Note.) Let cool on pan for 10 minutes. Remove from pan, and let cool completely on a wire rack. Serve with herbed olive oil, if desired. Store in an airtight container for up to 3 days.

Note: *The crust of the bread will soften as it cools. For a darker crust, bake for up to 10 minutes more; however, the crust will be a bit thicker.*

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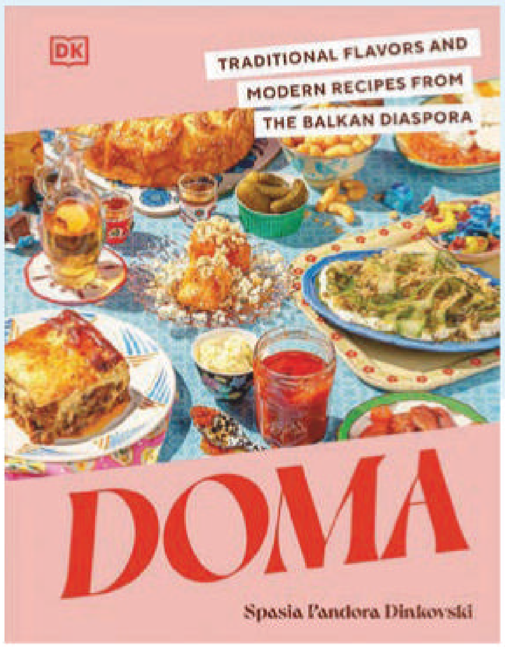
Time-Honored Tastes

Delve deep into the traditional ingredients and flavors of central and eastern European cuisines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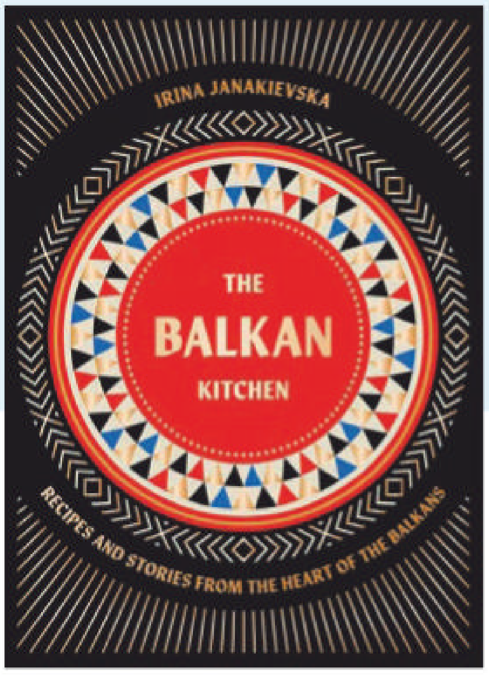
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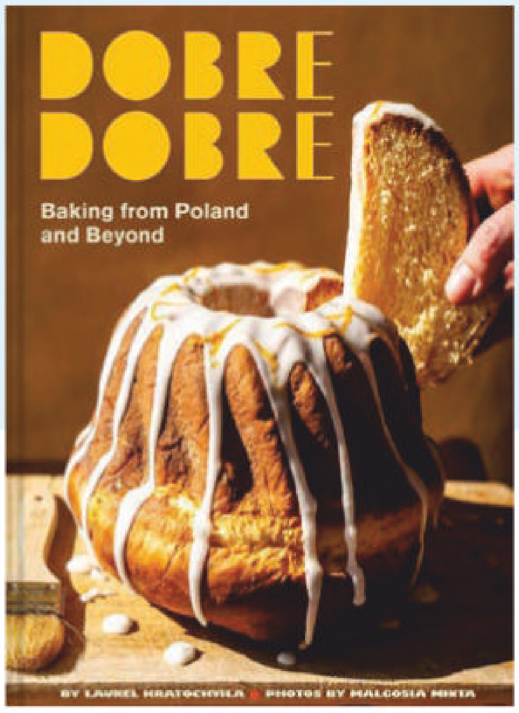
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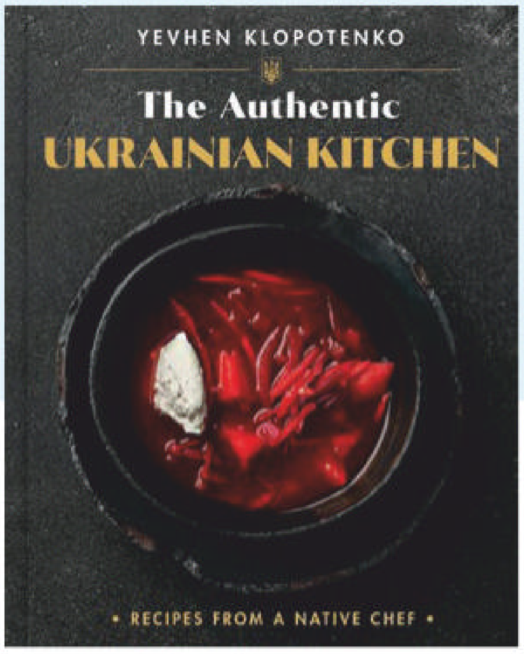
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Doma

BY SPASIA PANDORA DINKOVSKI

Macedonian-British baker and caterer Spasia Pandora Dinkovski effortlessly weaves ancient Balkan techniques and flavors into new and exciting recipes that remain completely authentic to her Slovak roots. Focusing on the skilled hands that created the beloved dishes of her past, including traditional Pogacha bread, savory Burek phyllo pies, Sour Cherry Baklava, and fried doughnut-like Tulumbi, this cookbook is filled with charming memories and stories of the recipes' origins and how Spasia and her family prepare, serve, and enjoy each dish.

instagram.com/mysticburek

The Balkan Kitchen

BY IRINA JANAKIEVSKA

As many chefs know, countless beloved recipes are more of a feeling than a step-by-step guide, and food writer Irina Janakievska's new book is a true testament to that sentiment. Interwoven with countless facts, snippets of history, and cherished memories, this book is best described as "recipes and stories from the heart of the Balkans," as it combines a cookbook with a memoir and features a range of recipes, from savory Klepe dumplings to the indulgently layered Prekmurska Gibanica with walnuts, fruit, and creamy cheese.

instagram.com/balkankitchen

Dobre Dobre

BY LAUREL KRATOCHVILA

American-born owner of Berlin-based Fine Bagels bakery, James Beard Award finalist and cookbook author Laurel Kratochvila shares more than 120 recipes for classic dishes from pioneering Polish bakers as well as innovative creations of her own. Featuring craveable favorites such as Karpatka (Cream and Choux Cake); Rose and Almond Jewel Rugelach; and Horseradish, Beet, and Summer Greens Bialys, Laurel highlights a wide range of sweet and savory recipes, regional history, and notable names to follow in today's Polish baking community.

finebagels.com

The Authentic Ukrainian Kitchen

BY YEVHEN KLOPOTENKO

In this detailed book, Ukrainian chef and social activist Yevhen Klopotenko takes on the challenging, yet crucial, role of preserving a generous selection of time-honored recipes from Ukraine's past. Entrenched among a war-torn land, Yevhen has spent years advocating for Ukraine's colorful cuisine to remain intact. Highlighting local spices, seasonal ingredients, and vibrant flavors, Yevhen's experience as a chef can be found throughout the pages in helpful notes and small changes meant to elevate these classic dishes.

instagram.com/klopotenko

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TEST KITCHEN

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The recipes in each issue pass through the *Bake from Scratch* test kitchen. Each is flavorful and distinctive and developed with your kitchen success in mind.

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CINNAMON SUGAR MORNING BUNS

These morning buns are crisp, flaky, and impossibly light. The secret? Laminated dough, enriched with eggs and milk for a tender crumb while still delivering delicate, pull-apart folds. Using Plugrà® Premium European Style Butter makes all the difference—it rolls thinner, laminates cleaner, and bakes up with superior crispness and decadent richness.

Makes 9 buns

Laminated dough:
⅓ cup (80 grams) warm water (110°F/43°C) to (115°F/46°C)
2¼ teaspoons (7 grams) instant yeast
6 tablespoons (72 grams) granulated sugar, divided
4½ cups (572 grams) bread flour
3½ teaspoons (10.5 grams) kosher salt
1 cup (227 grams) plus 6 tablespoons (84 grams) cold unsalted Plugrà® Premium European Style Butter, cubed
1 cup (240 grams) cold whole milk
All-purpose flour, for dusting

Filling:
½ cup (110 grams) firmly packed light brown sugar
1½ tablespoons (12 grams) all-purpose flour
1½ tablespoons (9 grams) ground cinnamon
¾ teaspoon (2.25 grams) kosher salt
5 tablespoons (70 grams) unsalted Plugrà® Premium European Style Butter, melted

Topping:
¼ cup (50 grams) granulated sugar
¼ cup (55 grams) firmly packed light brown sugar
1½ teaspoons (6 grams) ground cinnamon

1. For laminated dough: In a small bowl, stir together ⅓ cup (80 grams) warm water, yeast, and ½ teaspoon (2 grams) granulated sugar until well combined. Let stand until foamy, 5 to 10 minutes.
2. In the bowl of a stand mixer fitted with the paddle attachment, beat bread flour, salt, and remaining 5 tablespoons plus 2½ teaspoons (70 grams) sugar at low speed until combined. Add 6 tablespoons (84 grams) cold butter; beat until mixture resembles coarse crumbs, about 2 minutes. Add remaining 1 cup (227 grams) cold butter; pulse mixer between low speed and "off" just until butter is coated with flour.
3. Add cold milk to yeast mixture; while pulsing mixer between low speed and "off," add yeast mixture to flour mixture in a slow, steady stream just until a shaggy dough comes together. (There will still be large pieces of butter.)
4. Lightly dust work surface with all-purpose flour. Turn out dough onto prepared surface, and shape into a 7-inch square. (Dough will be soft and slightly sticky.) Wrap in plastic wrap, and freeze for 30 minutes.
5. Lightly dust work surface with all-purpose flour. On prepared surface, roll dough into an 18x9-inch rectangle, lightly dusting surface and top of dough with all-purpose flour as needed. Fold dough in half so short sides meet. Pat fold to mark center. Unfold dough, and pull one short side to center. Pull opposite side to center so short sides are touching. Pinch seams together; fold dough along center seam, like closing a book. Rotate dough 90 degrees; repeat rolling and folding procedure one more time. (Dough will start out soft, rough, and somewhat sticky but will come together; turn dough over as needed so edges are rolled out as evenly as possible.) Wrap in plastic wrap, and freeze for 15 minutes.
6. Repeat rolling and folding procedure one more time. (If dough is resisting or feels too soft, wrap in plastic wrap and freeze for 10 to 15 minutes before continuing.) Wrap in plastic wrap, and freeze for 30 minutes or refrigerate for 1 hour.
7. Spray 9 wells of 2 (6-well) popover pans or 2 (6-cup) jumbo muffin pans with baking spray with flour.
8. Lightly dust work surface with all-purpose flour. On prepared surface, roll laminated dough into a 20¾x18½-inch rectangle. (If dough or butter feels too soft, wrap in plastic wrap and freeze for 10 to 15 minutes before continuing.) Using a pizza cutter or sharp knife, trim ¼ inch off all sides of dough to make a 20¼x18-inch rectangle.
9. For filling: In a small bowl, whisk together brown sugar, flour, cinnamon, and salt.
10. Using a pastry brush, brush melted butter onto dough. Sprinkle brown sugar mixture evenly onto butter. Using a sharp knife or pizza cutter, cut dough into 27 (6x2¼-inch) rectangles.
11. Place 1 dough strip on work surface. Top with another dough strip, staggering so ½ inch of short end of strip extends beyond first strip. Top with a third dough strip, staggering another ½ inch so third strip extends beyond second strip. Starting with bottom strip, gently roll up strips together into a log, pushing center of log up about ⅛ inch. Place in a prepared well. Repeat stacking and rolling procedure with remaining dough. Loosely cover with a piece of greased plastic wrap. (Do not secure plastic wrap. You don't want to put any weight or pressure on proofed dough.) Let rise in a warm, draft-free place (75°F/24°C) until very puffed and dough jiggles slightly when pan is shaken, 1 to 1½ hours.
12. Preheat oven to 425°F (220°C).
13. Place buns in oven; immediately reduce oven temperature to 350°F (180°C).
14. Bake until golden brown and an instant-read thermometer inserted in center registers 210°F (98°C), 20 to 25 minutes. Let cool in pans for 5 minutes. Remove from pans, and let cool on a wire rack for 10 to 15 minutes.
15. For topping: In a shallow dish, whisk together granulated sugar, brown sugar, and cinnamon. Dredge buns in sugar mixture to fully coat. Serve warm, or let cool completely on a wire rack. Store in an airtight container for up to 3 days.

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Honey-Poached Plumcot Cake, PAGE 17

RECIPE DEVELOPMENT BY
OLA AGBODZA
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AARON CONRAD AND
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BEAUTIFULLY blushing Bundts

Start your summer baking with these fruit-forward cakes

Blueberry Pound Cake, PAGE 18

HONEY-POACHED PLUMCOT CAKE

Makes 1 (15-cup) Bundt cake

Plumcots—a hybrid of apricots and plums, with a mild apricot flavor and vivid plum color—are a stone fruit that comes into season in early May. They have a brief window of availability from about late spring to mid-July, and this cake takes full advantage of their peak ripeness by creating pockets of fragrant wine- and honey-simmered fruit studded throughout the buttery cake.

1½ cups (340 grams) unsalted butter, softened
3 cups (600 grams) granulated sugar*
4 large eggs (200 grams), room temperature
1 large egg white (30 grams), room temperature
5 cups (625 grams) plus 2 tablespoons (16 grams) all-purpose flour, divided
2½ teaspoons (7.5 grams) kosher salt
1½ teaspoons (7.5 grams) baking powder
1 teaspoon (2 grams) ground cardamom
1¾ cups (420 grams) whole buttermilk, room temperature
2½ teaspoons (15 grams) vanilla bean paste
Honey-Poached Plumcots (recipe follows), chopped
1½ cups (180 grams) confectioners' sugar
3 tablespoons plus 1 teaspoon (50 grams) reserved poaching liquid from Honey-Poached Plumcots

1. Preheat oven to 325°F (170°C).
2. In the bowl of a stand mixer fitted with the paddle attachment, beat butter and granulated sugar at medium speed until light and fluffy, about 5 minutes, stopping to scrape bottom and sides of bowl. Add eggs and egg white, one at a time, beating well after each addition.
3. In a large bowl, whisk together 5 cups (625 grams) flour, salt, baking powder, and cardamom. In a small bowl, stir together buttermilk and vanilla bean paste. With mixer on low speed, gradually add flour mixture to butter mixture alternately with buttermilk mixture, beginning and ending with flour mixture, beating just until combined after each addition.
4. In another medium bowl, toss together Honey-Poached Plumcots and remaining 2 tablespoons (16 grams) flour to coat.
5. Spray a 15-cup Bundt pan with baking spray with flour. Spoon one-fourth of batter (about 2½ cups or 558 grams) into prepared pan, spreading smooth with an offset spatula. Firmly tap pan on a kitchen towel-lined counter several times to release any air bubbles. Sprinkle one-third of plumcots mixture (about ⅔ cup or 147 grams) onto batter in pan, keeping fruit about ¼ inch away from sides of pan. Repeat layers of batter and plumcots two more times; top with remaining batter, spreading smooth.
6. Bake until a wooden pick inserted near center comes out clean and an instant-read thermometer inserted near center registers at least 205°F (96°C), 1 hour and 45 minutes to 2 hours. Let cool in pan on a wire rack for 10 minutes. Invert cake onto a wire rack, and let cool completely.
7. In another small bowl, whisk together confectioners' sugar and poaching liquid until smooth; spoon onto cooled cake. Refrigerate in an airtight container for up to 3 days.

**We used C&H® Granulated Sugar.*

Honey-Poached Plumcots

Makes about 2 cups

1¼ pounds (566 grams) ripe but firm plumcots, halved and pitted
1½ cups (360 grams) dry white wine
1 cup (336 grams) honey

1. In a medium saucepan, bring all ingredients to a boil over medium-high heat, stirring occasionally. Reduce heat, and simmer until fruit is just tender, 8 to 10 minutes. Remove plumcots using a slotted spoon, and let cool completely on a wire rack. Let poaching liquid cool completely.

PRO TIP: *Save your leftover poaching liquid—it's delicious and will keep for several weeks in the fridge. Drizzle it onto ice cream, yogurt, or fresh berries; stir it into iced tea or lemonade; or shake it up into a cocktail.*

Find the Anniversary and Elegant Party Bundt Pans we used for these recipes at
➔ bakefromscratch.com/shop.

june

BLUEBERRY POUND CAKE

Makes 1 (10-cup) Bundt cake

This cake was inspired by our test kitchen director, Laura Crandall, and her fond memories of picking blueberries with her sisters from their grandmother Peggy's yard. When their containers were full, they'd run back to the house, where Peggy would stir the freshly picked berries into a buttery pound cake that they ate warm from the oven with a touch of confectioners' sugar.

1¼ cups (284 grams) unsalted butter, softened
1¾ cups (350 grams) granulated sugar
2½ teaspoons (5 grams) lemon zest
5 large eggs (250 grams), room temperature
1 teaspoon (4 grams) vanilla extract
2⅓ cups (292 grams) plus 2 tablespoons (16 grams) all-purpose flour, divided
1½ teaspoons (4.5 grams) kosher salt
½ teaspoon (2.5 grams) baking soda
½ cup (120 grams) whole buttermilk, room temperature
1⅔ cups (250 grams) fresh blueberries
Garnish: confectioners' sugar

1. Preheat oven to 325°F (170°C).

2. In the bowl of a stand mixer fitted with the paddle attachment, beat butter, granulated sugar, and lemon zest at medium speed until light and fluffy, 3 to 4 minutes, stopping to scrape bottom and sides of bowl. Add eggs, one at a time, beating well after each addition. Beat in vanilla.

3. In a medium bowl, whisk together 2⅓ cups (292 grams) flour, salt, and baking soda. With mixer on low speed, gradually add flour mixture to butter mixture alternately with buttermilk, beginning and ending with flour mixture, beating until just combined after each addition and stopping to scrape bottom and sides of bowl.

4. In small bowl, toss together blueberries and remaining 2 tablespoons (16 grams) flour until coated. Using a rubber spatula, fold blueberry mixture into batter until well combined.

5. Spray a 10-cup Bundt pan with baking spray with flour. Spoon batter into prepared pan, gently spreading with an offset spatula.

6. Bake until a wooden pick inserted near center comes out clean, 1 hour to 1 hour and 5 minutes. Let cool in pan on a wire rack for 15 minutes. Invert cake onto a wire rack. Garnish with confectioners' sugar, if desired, and serve warm, or let cool completely. Store in an airtight container for up to 3 days.

SOUR CREAM-AND-CHIVE CLOVER ROLLS

Achieve professional-quality breads at home with the new Ooni Halo Pro Spiral Mixer. Its unique dual function of mixing and kneading efficiently creates a strong gluten network within dough, enabling these savory dinner rolls to bake up full and high on the outside with a soft, fluffy crumb on the inside.

Makes 12 rolls

3¼ to 3½ cups (406 to 438 grams) all-purpose flour, divided
3 tablespoons (36 grams) granulated sugar
1 tablespoon (9 grams) kosher salt
2¼ teaspoons (7 grams) instant yeast
1 teaspoon (2 grams) ground black pepper
½ cup (120 grams) plus 1 tablespoon (15 grams) water, divided
½ cup (120 grams) sour cream
¼ cup (57 grams) unsalted butter, cubed
2 large eggs (100 grams), room temperature and divided
3 tablespoons (9 grams) finely chopped fresh chives
Garlic-Chive Butter (recipe follows)

1. In the bowl of the Ooni Halo Pro Spiral Mixer, whisk together 1½ cups (188 grams) flour, sugar, salt, yeast, and pepper by hand until combined. Attach dough hook and breaker bar.

2. In a medium saucepan, heat ½ cup (120 grams) water, sour cream, and butter over medium-low heat, stirring frequently, until butter is melted and an instant-read thermometer registers 120°F (49°C) to 130°F (54°C). Add sour cream mixture and 1 egg (50 grams) to flour mixture; beat at medium-low speed, 30%, until combined, 1 to 2 minutes, stopping to scrape sides of bowl. With mixer on medium-low speed, 30%, gradually add 1¾ cups (219 grams) flour and chives, beating just until combined and stopping to scrape sides of bowl. Slowly increase mixer speed to medium, 50%. Beat until a soft, elastic dough forms, 6 to 10 minutes. Dough will pull away from sides of bowl and gather around the dough hook, and a small piece of dough will stretch until thin and translucent without tearing. Add up to remaining ¼ cup (31 grams) flour, 1 tablespoon (8 grams) at a time, if dough is too sticky.

3. Lightly spray a large bowl with cooking spray. Place dough in bowl, turning to grease top. Cover and let rise in a warm, draft-free place (75°F/24°C) until doubled in size, 30 to 45 minutes.

4. Spray a 12-cup muffin pan with cooking spray.

5. Turn out dough onto a clean surface, and divide into 36 portions (about 21 grams each). Shape each portion into a ball; place 3 dough balls in each prepared muffin cup. Cover and let rise in a warm, draft-free place (75°F/24°C) until puffed, about 30 minutes.

6. Preheat oven to 375°F (190°C).

7. In a small bowl, whisk together remaining 1 egg (50 grams) and remaining 1 tablespoon (15 grams) water; brush onto dough.

8. Bake until golden brown and an instant-read thermometer inserted in center registers at least 190°F (88°C), 10 to 12 minutes. Brush Garlic-Chive Butter onto hot rolls; serve warm with remaining butter.

Garlic-Chive Butter

Makes about 1 cup

1 cup (227 grams) unsalted butter, room temperature
2 tablespoons (6 grams) finely chopped fresh chives
2 cloves garlic (6 grams), grated
1 teaspoon (3 grams) kosher salt
½ teaspoon (1 gram) ground black pepper

1. In a small bowl, stir together all ingredients until smooth. Refrigerate in an airtight container for up to 2 weeks.

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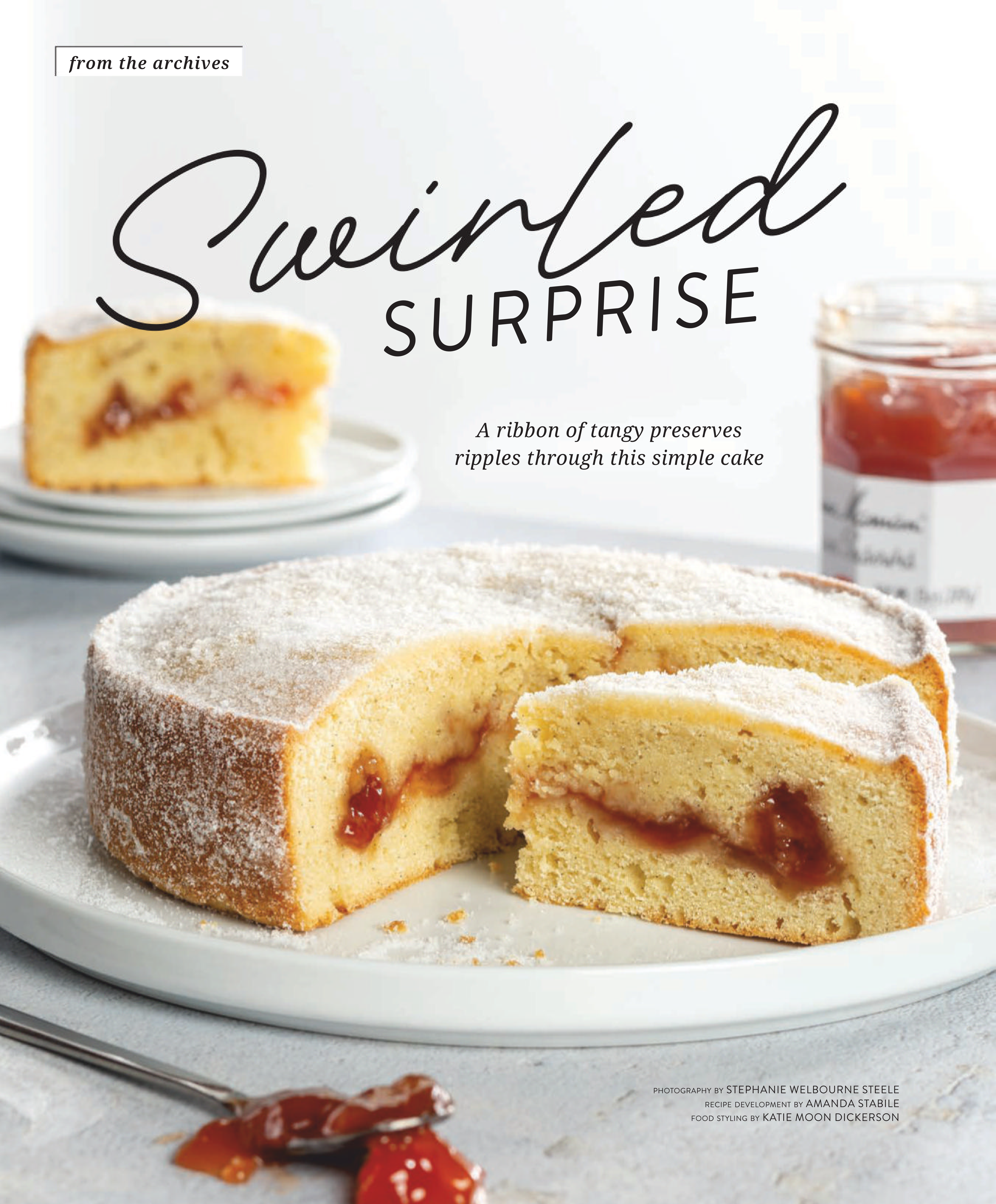
from the archives

Swirled SURPRISE

A ribbon of tangy preserves ripples through this simple cake



PHOTOGRAPHY BY STEPHANIE WELBOURNE STEELE
RECIPE DEVELOPMENT BY AMANDA STABILE
FOOD STYLING BY KATIE MOON DICKERSON

SUGARED PRESERVES CAKE

Makes 1 (8-inch) cake

After we published the original version of this jam-filled cake in our Spring 2016 issue, it quickly became a reader favorite. This new iteration still features an easy stir-together cake batter enhanced with fragrant vanilla bean paste, but we chose sweet-tart guava preserves for a taste of the tropics. A sugary topping finishes the cake with simple decadence.

The French Issue
bake
FROM SCRATCH
61
French Recipes You Can Make at Home
The Essential Brioche

Find the original version of this cake in the Spring 2016 issue.

Cake:

2½	cups (313 grams) all-purpose flour
1½	teaspoons (7.5 grams) baking powder
1	teaspoon (3 grams) kosher salt
1¼	cups (250 grams) granulated sugar
⅔	cup (150 grams) unsalted butter, melted and cooled slightly
¾	cup (180 grams) whole milk, room temperature
2	large eggs (100 grams), room temperature
4	teaspoons (24 grams) vanilla bean paste
¾	cup (240 grams) guava preserves*, stirred smooth

Topping:

½	cup (100 grams) granulated sugar
½	teaspoon (1.5 grams) kosher salt
¼	cup (57 grams) unsalted butter, melted

1. Preheat oven to 325°F (170°C). Spray a tall-sided 8-inch round cake pan with baking spray with flour. Line bottom of pan with parchment paper.

2. For cake: In a medium bowl, whisk together flour, baking powder, and salt.

3. In a large bowl, whisk together sugar and melted butter; whisk in milk, eggs, and vanilla bean paste until well combined. Sift flour mixture onto sugar mixture; whisk just until combined and no lumps remain. Spread half of batter (1¾ cups or 500 grams) into prepared pan.

4. Spoon remaining batter into a large pastry bag; cut a ½-inch opening in tip. Pipe a ring of batter around inside edge of pan to create a border. Gently spread preserves onto batter within border. Pipe remaining batter onto preserves; do not spread smooth. (See Note.)

5. Bake until a wooden pick inserted in center comes out clean, 1 hour to 1 hour and 10 minutes. Let cool in pan on a wire rack for 10 minutes.

6. For topping: In a small bowl, whisk together sugar and salt.

7. Remove cake from pan, and place, top side up, on a sheet of parchment paper. Brush melted butter on top and sides of cake. Sprinkle sugar-salt mixture on top and sides of cake, gently pressing to adhere. Let cool for at least 1 hour before serving. Refrigerate in an airtight container for up to 3 days.

**We used Bonne Maman® Guava Preserves.*

Note: *The preserves will create steam as the cake bakes. Piping on the top layer of batter without smoothing lets steam escape for a short while before the batter fully melts together, which reduces the likelihood of a gummy, underbaked top portion of cake.*

small batch with Edd Kimber

TWIST ON TRADITION

Contributing editor Edd Kimber shares his perfectly portioned update to a timeless European bread

PHOTOGRAPHY,
RECIPE DEVELOPMENT,
AND STYLING BY
EDD KIMBER

London-based **Edd Kimber** (@theboywhobakes) is a baker, food writer, and TV personality who is the first-ever winner of *The Great British Bake Off*. Since his big win, Edd has authored seven cookbooks, including *Small Batch Bakes*, published in 2022, and *Small Batch Cookies*, published in 2024. He was the first contributing editor and guest editor of *Bake from Scratch* and has continued to be a frequent contributor to the magazine and a guest instructor at baking retreats. We're so excited to bring you Edd's unique small-batch recipes throughout the year.

➔ Find Edd on Instagram at @theboywhobakes, on Substack (*eddkimber.substack.com*), and on his website, *theboywhobakes.co.uk*.

BONUS RECIPE! Get Edd's **Small-Batch Pretzel Buns** at ➔ ***bakefromscratch.com.***

SMALL-BATCH KOUGELHOPF

Makes 6 breads

Kougelhopf is a traditional bread from the Alsace region of France and is similar to a brioche but made in a distinctive, fluted tube pan and with more mix-ins. The true origins of the bread are hard to trace, but it is popular across Germany, Switzerland, and France. Whilst it is made in many different variations, the most popular is made with almonds and dried fruit. My small-batch version sticks to raisins for the dried fruit and adds a splash of rum for a kick. Whilst many versions of the bread are finished with a generous dusting of confectioners' sugar, I like to brush these mini loaves with a little melted butter and then coat them in granulated sugar, giving them an almost doughnut-like crust.

Kougelhopf Dough:

½ cup (64 grams) raisins
¼ cup (60 ml) rum
¼ cup (60 ml) water
2 cups (250 grams) all-purpose flour, plus more for flouring
¼ cup (50 grams) granulated sugar
2¼ teaspoons (7 grams) active dry yeast
1 teaspoon (3 grams) kosher salt
¼ cup plus 1 teaspoon (65 ml) whole milk
1 large egg (57 grams)
5 tablespoons (70 grams) unsalted butter, cubed, room temperature
Zest of 1 large orange (about 10 grams/ 1 tablespoon)

Coating:

¼ cup (57 grams) unsalted butter, melted
¼ cup (50 grams) granulated sugar

1. For the dough: Add the raisins, rum, and water to a small saucepan over medium heat, and cook until almost all the liquid has cooked off and the raisins are plump. Remove from heat, and let the raisins with liquid cool to room temperature. (If you want more of a boozy note, you can simply cover the raisins in the rum and leave for a day or so to allow them to soak up the rum slowly.)
2. Add the flour, sugar, yeast, and salt to the bowl of a stand mixer, and whisk together to combine. Pour in the milk and egg, and beat on medium-low speed using the dough hook until a shaggy dough is formed. Scrape dough hook and bottom and sides of bowl. With the mixer on medium-low speed, knead the dough for 12 to 15 minutes or until the dough is smooth and elastic.
3. With the mixer still running, add the butter one piece at a time. Continue beating the dough for up to another 10 minutes or until the butter has fully been incorporated and the dough is once again smooth and elastic.
4. Tip in the orange zest and the soaked raisins with liquid, and knead just until evenly distributed throughout the dough. Tip the dough out onto a lightly floured work surface, and form into a ball. Place the dough into a lightly greased bowl, cover, and set aside for about an hour or until doubled in size.
5. Tip the dough out onto a lightly floured work surface, and divide into 6 portions (about 100 grams each). Form each piece of dough into a neat ball, cover, and leave whilst you prepare your pan.
6. Lightly grease a 6-well mini Bundt pan with a little softened butter or baking spray with flour.
7. Using your fingers or the end of a wooden spoon, poke a small hole through the middle of each ball of dough, as if making a bagel, and place in the prepared pan. Loosely cover the pan with plastic wrap or a damp kitchen towel, and set aside until doubled in size, 30 to 45 minutes.
8. Preheat the oven to 400°F (200°C).
9. Bake for about 10 minutes or until golden brown. Allow to cool in the pan for a few minutes, and then carefully invert them onto a wire rack to cool enough so you can handle them.
10. For the coating: Brush the kougelhopfs with melted butter, and then roll in sugar to coat them entirely. Best served warm. These will keep for 2 to 3 days in a sealed container. b

➔ Get the mini Bundt pan that Edd uses for these kougelhopfs at *bakefromscratch.com/shop-the-issue.*

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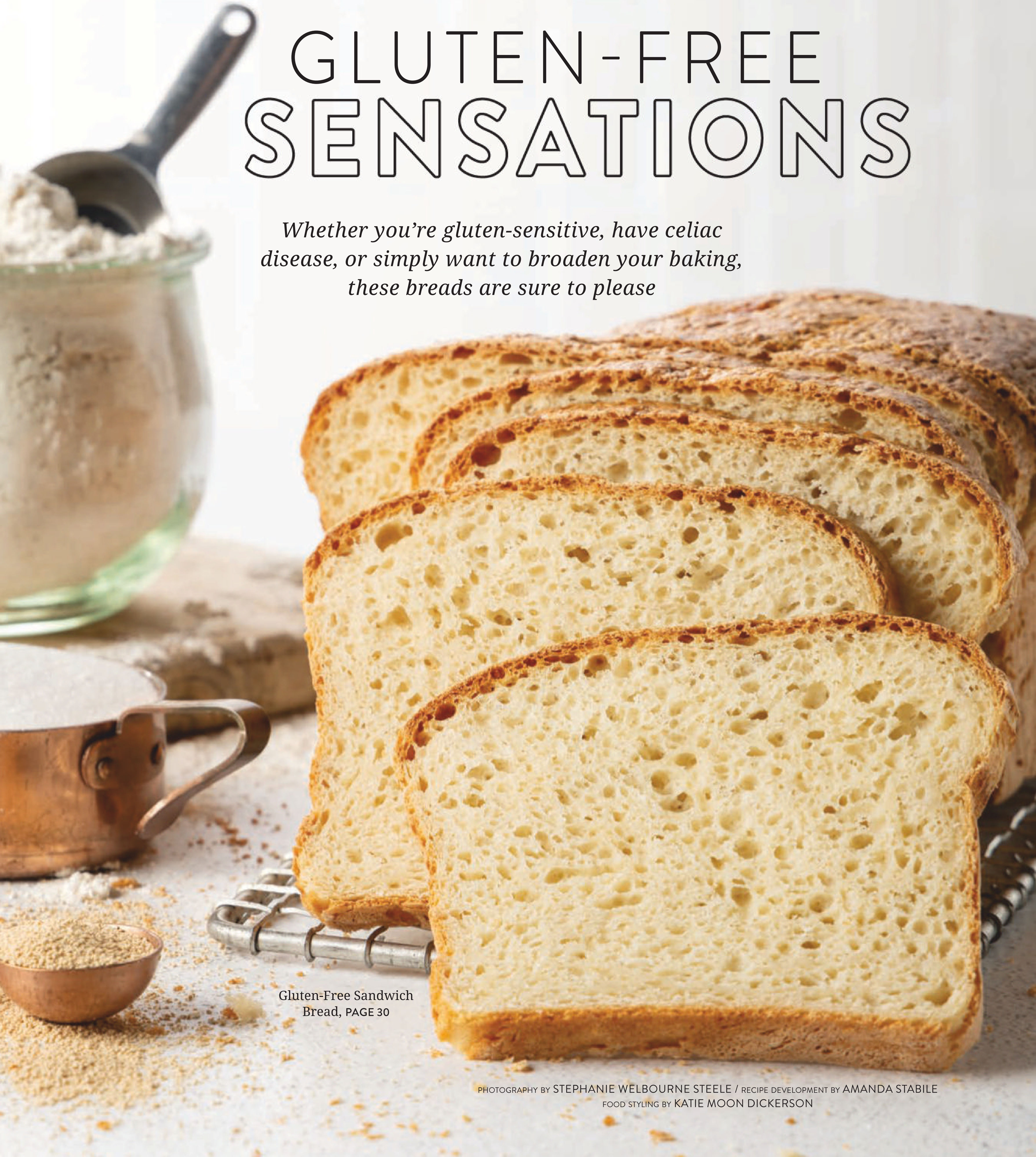
GLUTEN-FREE SENSATIONS

Whether you're gluten-sensitive, have celiac disease, or simply want to broaden your baking, these breads are sure to please



Gluten-Free Sandwich Bread, PAGE 30

PHOTOGRAPHY BY STEPHANIE WELBOURNE STEELE / RECIPE DEVELOPMENT BY AMANDA STABILE
FOOD STYLING BY KATIE MOON DICKERSON

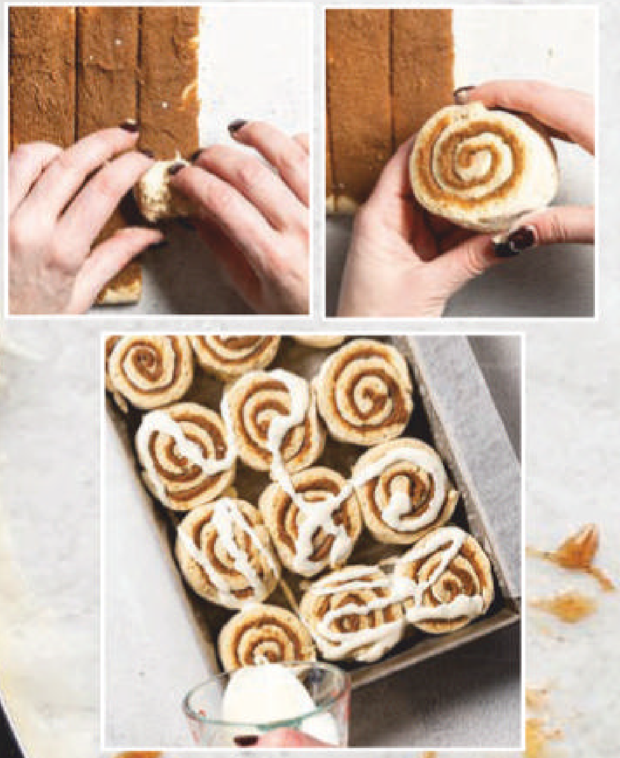
Gluten-Free
Cinnamon Rolls
PAGE 29

GLUTEN-FREE CINNAMON ROLLS

Makes 12 rolls

Soft, gooey, and spiced just right, you'd never know this breakfast classic is made without gluten. A brown sugar and cinnamon filling delivers familiar flavor, and because gluten-free bread takes longer to bake and has to reach a higher internal temperature than bread with gluten, a drizzle of heavy cream before baking keeps the rolls moist and soft.

Dough:
1½ cups (360 grams) whole milk
¾ cup (180 grams) water
½ cup (113 grams) unsalted butter
5¾ cups (690 grams) gluten-free bread flour (see Note), plus more for dusting
⅓ cup (66 grams) granulated sugar
4 teaspoons (12 grams) kosher salt
1 tablespoon (9 grams) instant yeast
1 teaspoon (5 grams) baking powder
2 large eggs (100 grams), room temperature



Filling:
1 cup (220 grams) firmly packed light brown sugar
¾ cup (170 grams) unsalted butter, room temperature
5 teaspoons (10 grams) ground cinnamon

⅓ cup (80 grams) heavy whipping cream, room temperature

Icing:
4 ounces (113 grams) cream cheese, softened
¼ cup (57 grams) unsalted butter, room temperature
1 cup (120 grams) confectioners' sugar
2 tablespoons (30 grams) whole milk
1 teaspoon (4 grams) vanilla extract

1. For dough: In a medium saucepan, heat milk, ¾ cup (180 grams) water, and butter over medium heat until butter is melted and an instant-read thermometer registers 120°F (49°C) to 130°F (54°C).
2. In the bowl of a stand mixer, stir together flour, granulated sugar, salt, yeast, and baking powder by hand until combined. Add warm milk mixture and eggs; using the paddle attachment, beat at low speed until combined, about 1 minute. Scrape sides of bowl. Beat at medium speed for 5 minutes. (Dough will be like a very thick batter.) Cover with plastic wrap, and refrigerate for 30 minutes to make dough easier to handle.
3. Spray a 13x9-inch baking pan with cooking spray. Line pan with parchment paper, letting excess extend over long sides of pan.
4. For filling: In a medium bowl, stir together brown sugar, butter, and cinnamon until combined.
5. Turn out dough onto a lightly floured surface, and roll into an 18x12-inch rectangle, with one long side closest to you. Spread filling onto dough in an even layer. Cut dough into 12 (1½-inch) strips. Roll up each strip, and place in prepared pan. Cover and let rise in a warm, draft-

free place (75°F/24°C) until very puffed, 30 to 45 minutes.

6. Preheat oven to 350°F (180°C).

7. Pour cream all over rolls.

8. Bake until golden brown and an instant-read thermometer inserted near center registers at least 210°F (99°C), about 55 minutes. Let cool in pan for 10 minutes.

9. For icing: In another medium bowl, stir together cream cheese and butter until smooth and combined. Add confectioners' sugar, milk, and vanilla, and stir until smooth and combined. Spread onto warm rolls. Serve immediately.

GLUTEN-FREE SANDWICH BREAD

Makes 1 (8½x4½-inch) loaf

This sandwich bread is soft, sturdy, and perfect for your favorite fillings. With a light, airy texture, it holds up beautifully to spreads, meats, and veggies. Whether you're making a classic PB&J or a hearty deli sandwich, this bread will become your go-to. It slices easily, stays fresh for days, and brings the comforting feel of homemade bread to every meal.

1¼	**cups (300 grams) warm water (120°F/49°C to 130°F/54°C)**
3	**large eggs (150 grams), room temperature and divided**
2	**tablespoons (28 grams) unsalted butter, melted and cooled**
3	**cups (360 grams) gluten-free bread flour (see Note)**
2	**tablespoons (24 grams) granulated sugar**
2½	**teaspoons (7.5 grams) kosher salt**
2¼	**teaspoons (7 grams) instant yeast**
½	**teaspoon (2.5 grams) baking powder**
1	**tablespoon (15 grams) water**

1. Lightly spray an 8½x4½-inch loaf pan with cooking spray. Line pan with parchment paper, letting excess extend over long sides of pan.

2. In the bowl of a stand mixer, whisk together 1¼ cups (300 grams) warm water, 2 large eggs (100 grams), and melted butter by hand until combined.

3. In a medium bowl, whisk together flour, sugar, salt, yeast, and baking powder. Add flour mixture to egg mixture; using the paddle attachment, beat at low speed until combined. Scrape sides of bowl. Beat at medium speed for 5 minutes. (Batter will look very thick and hold its shape when you scrape the sides of the bowl.) Spoon batter into prepared pan, spreading into an even layer.

4. In a small bowl, whisk together 1 tablespoon (15 grams) water and remaining 1 egg (50 grams). Brush top of loaf with egg wash. Loosely cover with plastic wrap, and let rise in a warm, draft-free place (75°F/24°C) until doubled in size and risen just above sides of pan, 1 to 1½ hours.

5. Preheat oven to 400°F (200°C).

6. Brush top of loaf again with egg wash.

7. Bake for 15 minutes. Reduce oven temperature to 350°F (180°C), and bake until loaf is golden brown and an instant-read thermometer inserted in center registers at least 210°F (99°C), 30 to 35 minutes more. Let cool in pan for 5 minutes. Carefully run a knife along sides of loaf to loosen from pan. Using excess parchment as handles, remove from pan, and let cool completely on a wire rack. Store in an airtight container for up to 3 days, or wrap tightly in plastic wrap and freeze for up to 3 months.

Note: *These recipes were developed using King Arthur Gluten-Free Bread Flour. Not all gluten-free flours are created the same, and results can vary significantly between brands and types of gluten-free flours.*

All That's Good and Loved

Bake from Scratch *recipe developer Amanda Stabile shares how she preserved her great-grandmother's German baking heritage for her family and their generations to come*

TEXT, PHOTOGRAPHY, AND RECIPE BY AMANDA STABILE

Käsekuchen!
Alles Gute und Liebe,
Oma Schneider

Like many chefs, I've been in the kitchen since I was tall enough to see over the counter, sneaking small bites of cookie dough when I thought my parents weren't looking. My parents wouldn't let me leave the dinner table until I at least tried a bite of whatever recipe they had discovered that week. It instilled in me a fearless attitude toward food, slurping down squid-ink pasta and learning how to appreciate a hearty loaf of seeded bread. I am lucky to have been born into a family where food isn't just a means of survival but a means of living, expressing yourself, and showing people you love them.

One of my earliest memories is being in my great-grandmother Oma Schneider's kitchen in Germany. She had previously made a cake that I decidedly didn't like (luckily, I have grown to love cheesecake since). She set her new creation in front of me, demanding in that firm but loving German tone that I try it. It was another cheesecake but with a pink, strawberry whipped topping, adorned with gummy bears. She had seen my stubbornness as a challenge and tried to create something that I would actually eat. Of course, anything with gummy bears will persuade a 4-year-old.

My Oma passed when I was 9, and the loss hit hard. Luckily, we still feel her to this day. Her recipes have been handed down to my mom and my siblings and me, and we make some of her cookies for Christmas each year, fondly recalling our childhoods each time we make them.

In summer 2024, I decided to look deeper. Oma had left behind a trove of recipes, but we only touched the same three or four cookie recipes every year. I flipped through other cookies, cakes, and breads, and what I thought would be an emotional awakening turned out to be a lot of head-scratching and squinting.

As you probably know well, reading old family recipes can be hard to decipher in English, let alone in my Oma's old High German. None of the recipes had yields, some of the ingredient lists didn't match the instructions, most of them didn't include baking times or temperatures, and one or two were strictly ingredient lists with just one instruction: Bake. At that point, I had about five years of experience in recipe development, so I took on the challenge and got to work.

A few weeks later, I had translated the recipes into English and tested every one of them, making slight tweaks along the way. Margarine was swapped to European-style butter; quark, a soft and creamy German cheese, was switched to Greek yogurt, its most readily available US equivalent; and every recipe was rewritten to work in a modern kitchen. I love my Oma, but for some reason, she had an aversion to adding salt to any baking recipe. Even baking recipes need salt, though, so I made sure to add it. I knew early on in all this that I was going to create a book of the recipes for my family. (I love surprises and giving gifts.) It was a lot of work to test and make all of them at least twice, but fortunately, they were solid recipes that turned out great.

If, like me, you're a creative perfectionist, photographing food can be an arduous

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This photo: Amanda (left) and her sister, Tori, at Oma's house in Germany. **Left photo:** Amanda's mother (left) and Oma.

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process, constantly moving and tweaking things until the image meets the unimaginable standards you've set in your head. But, knowing that my family is not as picky as I am, I let myself have fun with it. I pulled out old family cookie cutters for props, set scenes of winter cookie-making days and cozy mornings with coffee and fresh bread. Every sunny day was spent inside, taking advantage of the natural light.

The timeline, while self-imposed, pushed me. If I wasn't photographing and editing images, I was editing recipes. My eyes grew tired looking for spelling and grammatical errors (of which three still made it to the final product, and I had to learn to let it go). But to say it was all worth it in the end is a huge understatement.

There are so many places to get a book like mine printed. Online sites Shutterfly and Papier have book-making options, and even your local chain drugstore can make beautiful photo books. I chose the company Mixam because I could select everything from the weight of the paper and the dimensions of the book to the type of binding. I loved that level of customization.

After three months of work, each member of my family received a book as an early Christmas present so they would have the recipes on hand when it was time to start our holiday baking. I titled the book *Alles Gute und Liebe, Oma Schneider*, loosely meaning "all that is good and loved," and it's commonly used like the English phrase "all my love" when signing off a letter. It was the perfect tribute to my Oma and all the love she left behind. After the tears dried and hugs were shared, there was silence as everyone flipped through the book, aweing over familiar favorites and new recipes they were excited to try.

Hefezopf

Lebkuchen

Zitronekuchen

Beschwipste Kugeln

I started this project as a way to work through a creative slump, and getting back into the kitchen with recipes that put me there in the first place reminded me why I love baking. I don't live in the same state as my family, some are even in a different country, but the smell of Hazelnussmakronen (hazelnut macaroons) in the oven sends me right back home.

I am so grateful to have known my Oma, even though it was for a short time. She set me on a path that she could never have foreseen. It can be hard to reminisce about our lost loved ones, but remembering what they left behind can soothe your heart. Food will always be one of the best ways to preserve—and start—traditions, care for people you love, and remember the ones you've lost. If you're planning your legacy to leave behind, be sure to include a baking temperature and that all the eggs are accounted for.

KÄSE-SAHNE TORTE (GERMAN CHEESECAKE)

Makes 1 (9-inch) cake

My grandmother or great-grandmother would make this cake every year for my mom's birthday. My swap of Greek yogurt for quark keeps its signature fresh tang, and even though the filling is gelatin-set, it has a silky-smooth texture.

Base:

4	large eggs (200 grams), room temperature
150	grams (¾ cup) granulated sugar
2	teaspoons (8 grams) vanilla extract or 1 (0.33-ounce) packet (9 grams) vanilla sugar (see Notes)
70	grams (9 tablespoons) all-purpose flour
50	grams (6 tablespoons) cornstarch
2	teaspoons (10 grams) baking powder

Filling:

24	grams (2 tablespoons) unflavored powdered gelatin
45	grams (3 tablespoons) cold water

Käse-Sahne Torte

400 grams (1⅔ cups) cold heavy whipping cream
1,000 grams (4 cups plus 2½ tablespoons) 20% quark or plain whole Greek yogurt
5 grams (1 tablespoon) lemon zest
45 grams (3 tablespoons) fresh lemon juice
150 grams (1¼ cups) confectioners' sugar

Confectioners' sugar, for dusting

1. Preheat oven to 350°F (180°C). Line the bottom of a 9-inch round springform cake pan with parchment paper. Do NOT spray or grease the pan.
2. For the base: In the bowl of a stand mixer fitted with the whisk attachment, beat eggs, granulated sugar, and vanilla sugar at high speed until very thick and fluffy, 3 to 5 minutes. Beat in vanilla extract, if using.
3. Sift together flour, cornstarch, and baking powder into the egg mixture. Using a rubber spatula, fold in until combined and no dry spots remain. Do not be too vigorous with your folding. Spoon batter into prepared pan, smoothing the top as needed.
4. Bake until cake is golden brown and springs back to the touch and a wooden pick inserted in the center comes out clean, 35 to 40 minutes. Run a thin-bladed knife around inside of pan, gently loosening cake from the sides of the pan but not removing the sides. Let cake cool completely in the pan on a wire rack.
5. For the filling: In a medium bowl, whisk together gelatin and 45 grams (3 tablespoons) cold water. Let stand until gelatin has bloomed and mixture is thick, about 5 minutes.
6. In the clean bowl of a stand mixer fitted with the whisk attachment, beat heavy cream on medium-high speed until stiff peaks form, 4 to 5 minutes. Cover and refrigerate until ready to use.
7. In another large bowl, whisk together quark or yogurt, lemon zest, lemon juice, and confectioners' sugar until smooth and no lumps remain.
8. Heat gelatin mixture in the microwave in 20-second intervals until fully melted. Add about 60 grams of the quark mixture to the melted gelatin, stirring until combined. Stir in another 60 grams of the quark mixture. Add the entire gelatin mixture back to the quark mixture, stirring until combined. Fold in whipped cream. (Mixture may not look totally smooth; that is OK.)
9. Using a large serrated knife, torte the sponge base by gently cutting it in half horizontally. Place the top half, cut side up, onto a serving plate. Place the ring of the springform pan around the cake base, locking it in place. Place a strip of parchment paper along the inside of the springform pan so that it comes up about 1 inch above the top of the ring. Spoon filling onto the base, smoothing as needed. Cut remaining half of sponge into 12 equal wedges, and place the wedges, cut side down, onto the filling (see Notes). Refrigerate until ready to serve, at least 2 hours or up to overnight.
10. When ready to serve, remove the springform ring and carefully peel off the parchment. Dust with confectioners' sugar. Refrigerate for up to 3 days.

Notes: *Vanilla sugar is readily available in European grocery stores. You'll most likely have to buy it online in the US, or you can easily make your own with our recipe for Vanilla Sugar at* bakefromscratch.com.

Cutting the top of the cake into wedges lets you slice through the filling and the bottom of the cake without exerting pressure that would otherwise make the filling squeeze out.

It's Time to Bake

Mastering Techniques and Ingredients Behind Every Delicious Creation

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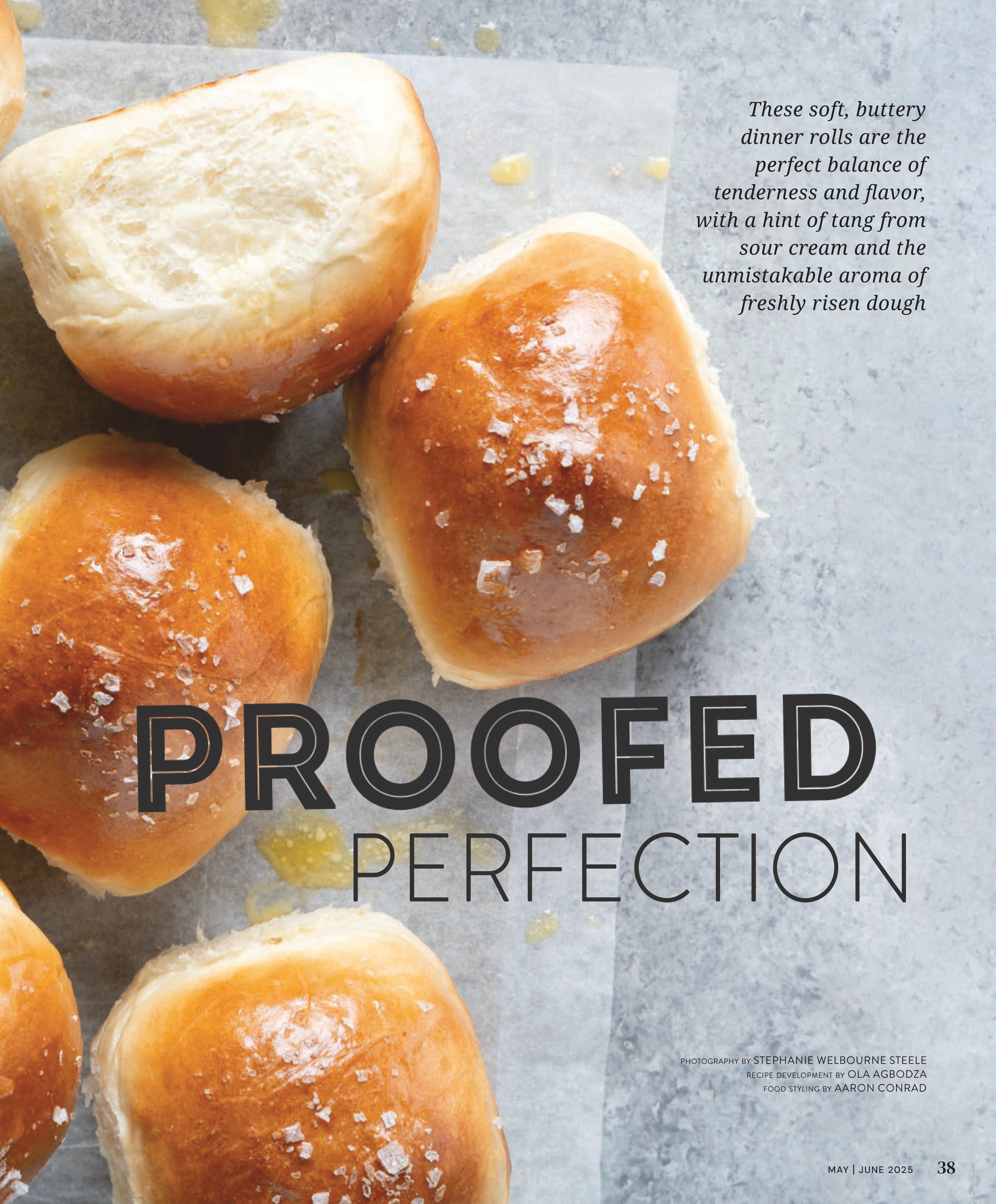
gold standard



These soft, buttery dinner rolls are the perfect balance of tenderness and flavor, with a hint of tang from sour cream and the unmistakable aroma of freshly risen dough

PROOFED PERFECTION

PHOTOGRAPHY BY STEPHANIE WELBOURNE STEELE
RECIPE DEVELOPMENT BY OLA AGBODZA
FOOD STYLING BY AARON CONRAD

These dinner rolls are an ode to the comforting scent and rich flavor of yeast. Every bite is a celebration of its heady aroma, which we've carefully elevated by slightly increasing the yeast amount, ensuring it shines through in every pillowy bite. The key here is balance. While yeast is delicate, with careful proofing and a watchful eye, you'll achieve rolls that rise to a perfect softness. It's a dance of temperature and time; overproofing can strike quickly, but when done right, you'll get rolls that are light and cloudlike, with a tenderness that melts in your mouth.

There's no need for special ingredients—just everyday staples. The addition of sour cream creates an unrivaled softness, something milk alone can't achieve. Its slight acidity balances the sweetness of sugar, giving the bread a depth that's both comforting and indulgent. Though sugar can sometimes weaken gluten, we've carefully balanced it with the other ingredients to maintain structure without sacrificing tenderness. The result? Dinner rolls that feel both nostalgic and luxurious—perfectly soft, light, and subtly sweet; simple yet extraordinary.

FLUFFY DINNER ROLLS

Makes 12 rolls

These soft, buttery dinner rolls are a delightful centerpiece for any meal, boasting a light, fluffy texture that's elevated by the distinct flavor of yeast and subtle tang of sour cream. The use of both sour cream and butter adds richness to the dough, ensuring that each roll has a golden, tender crumb. While a stand mixer does much of the work, the secret to achieving the perfect dough lies in careful mixing and kneading, allowing the yeast to work its magic. The finishing touch—flaked sea salt—offers a perfect contrast to the rolls' sweetness, making each bite a little burst of savory delight.

4¾ to 5 cups (594 to 625 grams) all-purpose flour, divided, plus more for dusting
¼ cup (50 grams) granulated sugar
2 (0.25-ounce) packages (14 grams) instant yeast*
1 tablespoon (9 grams) kosher salt
1 cup (240 grams) plus 1 tablespoon (15 grams) water, divided
½ cup (120 grams) sour cream
⅓ cup (76 grams) plus 2 tablespoons (28 grams) unsalted butter, melted and divided
2 large eggs (100 grams), room temperature and divided
Garnish: flaked sea salt

1. In the bowl of a stand mixer, whisk together 1½ cups (188 grams) flour, sugar, yeast, and kosher salt by hand.
2. In a small saucepan, heat 1 cup (240 grams) water, sour cream, and ⅓ cup (76 grams) melted butter over medium heat until an instant-read thermometer registers 120°F (49°C) to 130°F (54°C). Add warm sour cream mixture to flour mixture; using the paddle attachment, beat at medium speed until combined. Beat in 1 egg (50 grams) until combined. With mixer on low speed, gradually add 3¼ cups (406 grams) flour, beating just until a shaggy dough forms.
3. Switch to the dough hook attachment. Beat at low speed until a soft, somewhat sticky dough forms, 10 to 12 minutes, stopping to scrape dough hook and bottom and sides of bowl; add up to remaining ¼ cup (31 grams) flour, 1 tablespoon (8 grams) at a time, if dough is too sticky. Cover and let stand in a warm, draft-free place (75°F/24°C) until dough is puffed up, 20 to 30 minutes.
4. Line a 13x9-inch baking pan with parchment paper.
5. Divide dough into 12 portions (about 97 grams each). Using lightly floured hands, roll 1 portion into a smooth ball. (Keep remaining dough covered to prevent it from drying out.) Place in prepared pan. Repeat with remaining dough portions. Cover and let rise in a warm, draft-free place (75°F/24°C) until doubled in size, 30 to 40 minutes.
6. Preheat oven to 375°F (190°C).
7. In a small bowl, whisk together remaining 1 egg (50 grams) and remaining 1 tablespoon (15 grams) water; brush onto dough. Garnish with sea salt, if desired.
8. Bake until golden brown and an instant-read thermometer inserted in center registers 190°F (88°C), 18 to 22 minutes, covering with foil to prevent excess browning, if necessary. Let cool for 10 minutes. Brush remaining 2 tablespoons (28 grams) melted butter onto rolls. Serve warm.

**We used Red Star® Quick Rise™ Instant Yeast.*

gluten-free BAKING:

ESSENTIAL FLOURS AND STARCHES

Our test kitchen director explains the key ingredients that make gluten-free baking successful and how best to utilize them

BY LAURA CRANDALL

Gluten-free baking has come a long way in the past 10 years. When I was first diagnosed with an autoimmune disorder that required me to go gluten-free, it was an incredibly hard process. There were not a lot of options available in regular grocery stores. There was a lot of trial and error, and it was incredibly expensive. Fortunately, the number of products available has increased, as well as the quality and accessibility of these products. Allow me to introduce you to gluten-free flours and starches and share my experience of how they can be used in baking.

1:1 Gluten-Free Baking Flour

A mix of gluten-free ingredients, 1:1 flours are meant to be used in baked goods that are not yeasted. The "1:1" is referring to the ratio for replacement in a recipe. It means you replace the all-purpose wheat flour in a recipe with an equal amount of the gluten-free flour. For example, if a recipe calls for 2½ cups regular all-purpose flour, you would use 2½ cups gluten-free baking flour (by volume, not weight). Every brand is a little different, but it will be a mixture of rice flours, starches, and gums.

Gluten-Free All-Purpose and Bread Flours

These types of flours are meant to be more successful in leavened breads. There are two big differences between these flours and 1:1 baking flour. First, most gluten-free bread flours are made with wheat starch that has had the gluten removed. It's important to know that even though they are gluten-free, they are not wheat-free, so these products might not be suitable for your dietary needs. Second, these flours typically do not have xanthan gum in the mixture but use psyllium fiber instead to build structure and elasticity.

Almond Flour/Meal

There are a ton of different nut flours/meals out there that you can use to add flavor, texture, and nutrients to baked goods, but the most common is almond. This product is typically not used on its own in baked goods and needs to be blended or mixed with another flour product. If you would like to add it to an existing recipe, our recommendation is to replace no more than 25% of the flour in a recipe with a nut flour/meal (by weight, not volume).

Coconut Flour

Coconut flour is similar to nut meals, as it adds flavor, texture, and nutrients to a baked good. However, it is extremely absorbent—it can absorb about four times its weight in liquid. We do not recommend using this in recipes unless the recipe has been specifically developed and tested with coconut flour.

Oat Flour

Oat flour is oat groats that have been ground into a fine powder. It will add both flavor and nutrients to a recipe. It's important to make sure that if you are dealing with a severe allergy or celiac disease, you double-check the packaging to make sure the oats are certified gluten-free. Sometimes oats are milled on the same machines as wheat grain, which can result in cross-contamination.

Rice Flour

Rice flour is the foundation for most gluten-free baking. It's made from finely ground rice and can be made from either white or brown rice. It can be used as a thickener instead of flour but is mostly used as a replacement for flour in cookies, cakes, and pastries. Sweet rice flour (or glutinous rice flour) is different from regular rice flour; it's made from sticky short-grain rice and used to make specific recipes, like mochi.

Cornmeal

Cornmeal/corn flour is ground white, yellow, or blue corn and is available in fine, medium, and coarse grinds. This flour is typically used in quick breads, but the coarser-ground meals are great for dusting the outside of yeasted doughs to keep them from sticking and give a fantastic crunch once baked (think pizza crust and English muffins). What size grind you use in recipes is totally up to personal preference, but I like fine and medium best. Be aware there are a lot of cornmeal mixes out there (such as self-rising cornmeal mix or cornbread mix) that are a blend of regular flour and cornmeal with leavening, which are not gluten-free.

Starches and Thickening Agents

Starches are important in gluten-free baking because they mimic the starch found in wheat flour. Not all starches are created equal, though; each does something different for a recipe. These are the most common, but beware—too much can result in a dense, gummy baked good.

CORNSTARCH: This is great for thickening custards and pie fillings instead of using all-purpose flour. It's important to bring the mixture to a boil to activate the cornstarch and then let it cook for 1 to 2 minutes for the starchy taste to dissipate. Using cornstarch will give a cloudy appearance to your final custard or filling.

POTATO STARCH: Although it's made from potatoes, it has no potato flavor. It has twice the thickening ability of wheat flour, which helps provide structure. It also adds tenderness and moisture to baked goods.

ARROWROOT: It has twice the thickening ability of wheat flour and is similar to cornstarch in that it's used to thicken custards and fillings; however, it's tasteless and becomes transparent after cooking.

TAPIOCA/TAPIOCA FLOUR: This is a pure starch that's used to thicken fillings and sauces and becomes glossy and translucent after cooking. It can also be used in baked goods to give a chewy texture and provide structure.

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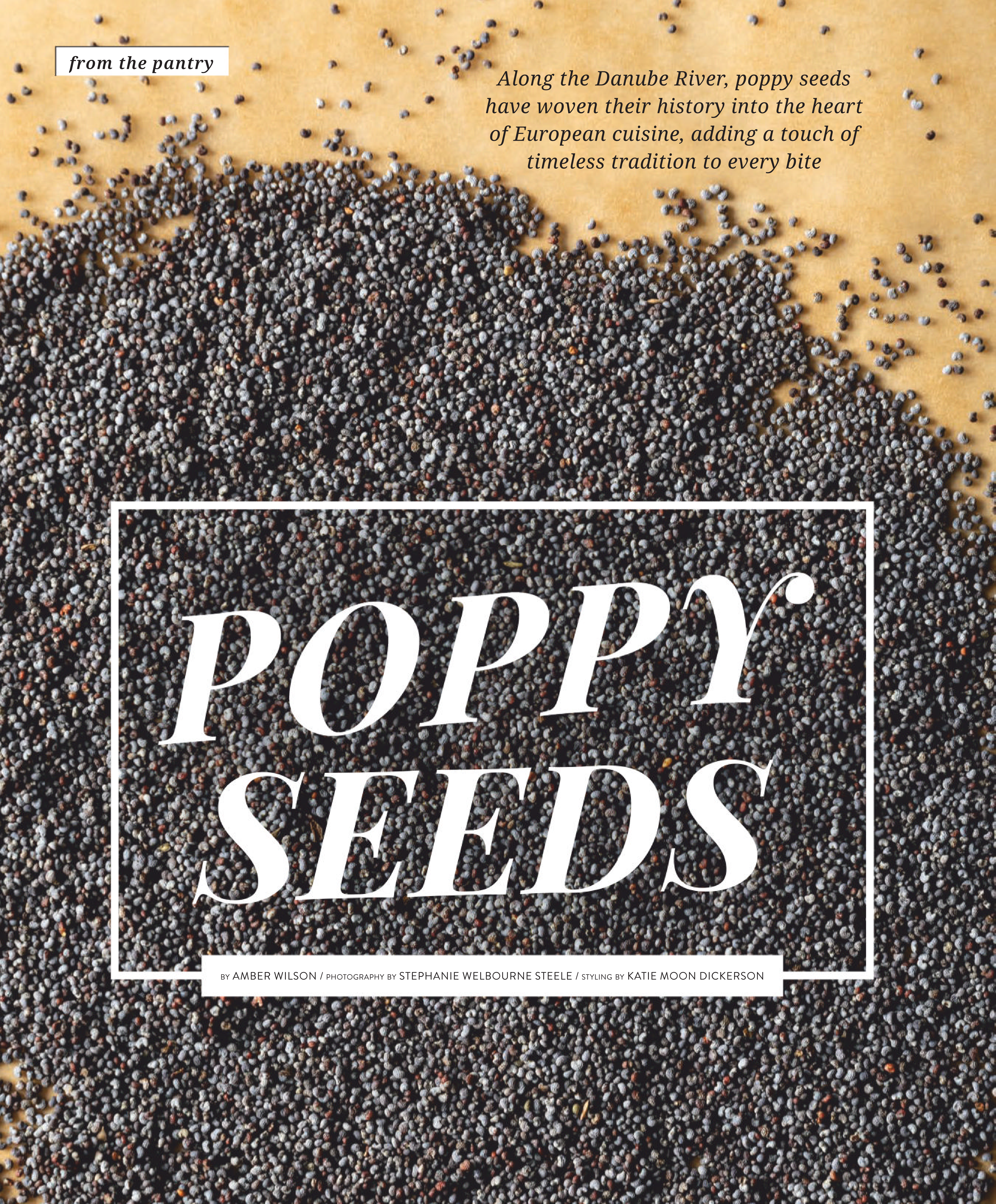

from the pantry

Along the Danube River, poppy seeds have woven their history into the heart of European cuisine, adding a touch of timeless tradition to every bite

POPPY SEEDS

BY AMBER WILSON / PHOTOGRAPHY BY STEPHANIE WELBOURNE STEELE / STYLING BY KATIE MOON DICKERSON

The Danube River, winding its way from the gentle hills of Bavaria to the shores of the Black Sea, has long been more than just a river; it is a vein of history, culture, and food. Along its banks, poppy seeds have quietly etched themselves into the landscape—not just in the fields where the delicate flowers grow but also in the hearts of the people who have cultivated and consumed them for generations.

There's something almost poetic about the way these tiny, unassuming seeds have threaded themselves into the culinary rituals along the Danube. Perhaps it's their humble nature, their ability to seamlessly fit into both sweet and savory dishes, that gives them such a profound presence. Poppy seeds offer a grounding contrast to the sweetness of honey and fruit preserves, balancing beautifully with citrus zest and the richness of cream. Their subtle bitterness and nutty flavor make them wonderfully versatile—whether paired with the earthy flavors of rye bread or added to a fruit-filled strudel.

STORING POPPY SEEDS

Poppy seeds are delicate little things that can lose their flavor fast if not stored properly. Keep them in an airtight container in a cool, dark place, away from heat and moisture. If you don't use them often, pop them in the fridge or even the freezer, where they'll stay fresh for up to six months. Just be sure to let them come to room temperature before you use them, as this will help release their full flavor and aroma.

Native to the Mediterranean region, the poppy plant was cultivated for centuries across the ancient world. Records show that poppy seeds were used for medicinal purposes in Egypt, where they served as a sedative and pain reliever. By the time the Roman Empire expanded its reach across much of Europe, poppy seeds were being incorporated into food—not just for flavor but also for their nutritional and medicinal benefits. Yet it wasn't until the Middle Ages, when trade routes between eastern and western Europe flourished, that poppy seeds began to make their mark on the cuisine of the Danube region. Poppy plants thrive in the fertile lands along the river, and in the small villages scattered along its banks—where time often seems suspended—wild poppies bloom in the fields, swaying in the breeze before the seeds are carefully harvested.

As the delicate, papery petals of the poppy flower fall away, they reveal seed pods, which gradually dry over time. Once fully mature, the pods are harvested either by hand or machine. The seeds are then carefully separated from the pods and cleaned. The harvesting process is meticulous, ensuring that each seed is collected with care. This attention to detail guarantees that the seeds retain their full flavor and texture, making them ideal for the baked goods that have been a cornerstone of European baking traditions for centuries.

The Danube has long been a conduit for cultural exchange, and the use of poppy seeds along the river reflects this shared history—whether in Czech desserts like *makový dort* (poppy seed cake) or Romanian breads filled with dark poppy seed paste.

In Hungary, the distinctive taste of poppy seeds is inextricably linked with *mákos guba*, a bread dessert made from leftover sweet white bread, milk, butter, sugar, and a generous dusting of crushed poppy seeds. This simple, comforting dish is a symbol of resourcefulness, passed down through generations. In Vienna, Austria, poppy seeds are essential in strudels, both sweet and savory, where they're paired with fillings like apples, cinnamon, raisins, or even poppy seed paste, creating a rich, contrasting flavor against the light, flaky pastry layers.

In the Czech Republic, they are often used to fill *koláče*—round pastries typically filled with fruit preserves or poppy seed paste. In Slovakia, they fill *makovník*, a sweet roll made from buttery dough with layers of black or white poppy seed filling.

In Romania, where the Danube cuts through the southern regions of Europe, poppy seeds are often mixed with ground walnuts to create a rich filling used in pastries, cakes, and traditional bread. It's a luxurious blend of flavors that honors the abundance of the riverbanks—rich, nutty, and slightly bitter yet undeniably comforting. I imagine sitting by the river, watching it flow, and enjoying a piece of freshly baked *cozonac*—a traditional sweet bread swirled with cocoa powder, cinnamon, and walnut filling, sprinkled with poppy seeds, and baked to perfection.

Poppy seeds offer more than just flavor; much like the river, whose currents shape the land, they offer a connection to the past, to the land, and to the enduring beauty of nature's simplest gifts. In a world that often rushes forward, poppies—like the Danube—remind us to pause, reflect, and savor the quiet moments that, in their unassuming grace, bind us to the eternal flow of life.

BAKE WITH

POPPY SEEDS

In this issue, don't miss:

Slovakian Filled Crescents

PAGE 92

St. Helena Yeasted Pancakes with Poppy Seeds

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Poppy Seed Roll

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THE SUBTLE ELEGANCE OF WHITE POPPY SEEDS

While black poppy seeds are the more well-known variety, white poppy seeds deserve attention as well. These lesser-known gems are often used in delicate pastries, lending a refined appearance to baked goods. Certain cultivars of poppies naturally produce paler seeds, which have a softer, less intense flavor compared to the bold black variety. White poppy seeds are particularly favored for their milder taste and aesthetic appeal in pastries and confections. In cooking, they're often toasted and sprinkled on food as you would sesame seeds or nuts.

SACHER-TORTE

Embrace the timeless charm of this swoon-worthy Viennese staple

PHOTOGRAPHY BY STEPHANIE WELBOURNE STEELE / RECIPE DEVELOPMENT BY OLA AGBODZA / FOOD AND PROP STYLING BY KATIE MOON DICKERSON

Sacher-Torte, a Vienna, Austria, classic since 1832, was created by Franz Sacher for Prince Metternich and has since become a timeless symbol of elegance. The decadent bittersweet chocolate and satisfying apricot filling are a match made in heaven, and a brush of simple syrup ensures moisture and tenderness. Topped with a smooth, glossy glaze that elegantly covers the sides, Sacher-Torte is as visually stunning as it is delicious—a perfect balance of flavors and textures in every bite.

A Slice of Vienna's History

Vienna, with its grand cafés and waltzing rhythm, has long been a city where history is served on a plate. Few dishes speak to the elegance and mystery of this city more than Sacher-Torte, a cake born from a stroke of fate.

In 1832, Austrian State Chancellor Prince Klemens Wenzel von Metternich tasked his kitchen with creating an extraordinary dessert to impress a group of distinguished guests. But as luck would have it, the head chef fell ill that evening, leaving a 16-year-old apprentice, Franz Sacher, to step up to the challenge. With limited ingredients—dark chocolate, butter, eggs, and apricot jam—Franz managed to create what would become one of the most famous cakes in the world: the Sacher-Torte. The cake was so successful, it was deemed "presentable at court," and its rich, bittersweet chocolate flavor quickly gained a cult following.

But the true magic of Sacher-Torte came later, with Franz's son, Eduard Sacher. A talented pastry chef in his own right, Eduard refined the recipe when he began serving the cake at the Hotel Sacher, which he established in the heart of Vienna. His version of the cake was elevated, with a richness and balance that made it an unforgettable experience. It was no longer just a cake—it became a celebration of refinement, a true taste of Vienna, and a dessert worthy of its own place in history.

SACHER-TORTE

Makes 1 (8-inch) cake

Sacher-Torte is one of the most iconic cakes of Vienna, Austria, created in 1832 by Franz Sacher for Prince Metternich and refined by his Franz's son, Eduard. The addition of sour cream, which adds both moisture and tang, elevates the richness of the chocolate while keeping the cake tender. It's a small detail, but one that creates the signature melt-in-your-mouth texture. Additionally, the method of folding the egg whites into the batter with care is vital for achieving the perfect light and fluffy texture, despite the cake's dense appearance. Brushing the layers with simple syrup ensures moisture, and apricot preserves lend just the right hint of fruitiness. The glossy chocolate glaze is essential—let it fully cover the sides for its signature finish.

Cake layers:

4	large eggs (200 grams), separated and room temperature
½	cup (100 grams) plus ⅓ cup (67 grams) granulated sugar, divided
6	ounces (170 grams) bittersweet chocolate, chopped
¼	cup (57 grams) unsalted butter
⅓	cup (80 grams) sour cream
1	teaspoon (4 grams) vanilla extract
1	cup (125 grams) unbleached cake flour
1	teaspoon (5 grams) baking powder
1	teaspoon (3 grams) kosher salt

Syrup:
¼ cup (50 grams) granulated sugar
¼ cup (60 grams) water

1 (13-ounce) jar (370 grams) apricot preserves*

Glaze:
10 ounces (283 grams) bittersweet chocolate, chopped
⅓ cup (76 grams) unsalted butter
2 tablespoons (42 grams) corn syrup

Garnish: chocolate sprinkles

1. Preheat oven to 325°F (170°C). Line bottoms of 2 (8-inch) round cake pans with parchment paper.
2. For cake layers: In the bowl of a stand mixer fitted with the whisk attachment, beat egg whites at medium-high speed until foamy. Reduce mixer speed to medium-low, and add ⅓ cup (67 grams) sugar in a slow, steady stream. Increase mixer speed to medium-high, and beat until medium peaks form.
3. Meanwhile, in the top of a double boiler, heat chocolate and butter over simmering water, stirring occasionally, until fully melted. Remove from heat. Whisk in remaining ½ cup (100 grams) sugar until well combined. Let cool slightly, about 5 minutes. Whisk in egg yolks, sour cream, and vanilla until well combined.
4. In a medium bowl, sift together flour, baking powder, and salt. Gradually whisk flour mixture into chocolate mixture. (Mixture will be thick.) Fold in one-third of egg white mixture. (This will thin out the batter.) Carefully fold in remaining egg white mixture in two additions. Divide batter between prepared pans (about 394 grams each). Run a small offset spatula through batter to help release any large air bubbles, and spread smooth.
5. Bake until fragrant and top is firm to the touch when gently pressed, about 20 minutes. Let cool in pans for 10 minutes. Run a small offset spatula or thin knife around sides of pans to loosen layers. Let cool completely in pans on wire racks.
6. For syrup: In small saucepan, bring sugar and ¼ cup (60 grams) water to a boil over medium-high heat, whisking occasionally until sugar dissolves. Remove from heat; let cool completely.
7. Strain preserves through a fine-mesh sieve into a small bowl, discarding solids. (You should have about ¾ cup or about 240 grams after straining.)
8. Invert cooled cake layers onto a wire rack set on a rimmed baking sheet. Using a pastry brush, brush cooled syrup onto each layer. Spread ½ cup (160 grams) strained preserves onto 1 cake layer. Top with remaining cake layer, syrup side up. Using an offset spatula, spread remaining ¼ cup (80 grams) strained preserves on top and sides of cake. Refrigerate until set, about 30 minutes.
9. For glaze: In the top of a double boiler, heat chocolate, butter, and corn syrup over simmering water, stirring occasionally, until chocolate and butter are melted and mixture is smooth. Remove from heat; let cool for 5 minutes. Spoon about ¼ cup (about 80 grams) glaze into a pastry bag fitted with a small round piping tip (Wilton No. 4).
10. Pour remaining warm glaze onto cake, letting glaze run over sides and using an offset spatula to fully cover cake. Let stand at room temperature for 5 minutes.
11. Using a cake lifter, carefully transfer cake to desired serving plate. Garnish edges of cake with chocolate sprinkles, if desired. Pipe reserved glaze onto cake as desired. Refrigerate until glaze is set, 10 to 15 minutes. Let stand at room temperature for 20 to 25 minutes before serving. Refrigerate in an airtight container for up to 3 days.

**We used Bonne Maman® Apricot Preserves.*

PRO TIPS: *Line your baking sheet with foil or plastic wrap before glazing your cake for easy cleanup.*

For cake slices with clean edges, use a knife with a long, thin blade, and dip it into hot water and dry it between each cut.

Kitchen Confidants

Here are a few standout tools to help you make the perfect Sacher-Torte

The double-boiler method is a slow and steady process for melting chocolate and butter, which ensures that the chocolate retains its smooth, glossy texture. Place a **glass bowl** over a **saucepan** of simmering water, ensuring the bowl doesn't touch the water. The gentle heat of the simmering water prevents the chocolate from scorching.

An **offset spatula** is your best friend when it comes to smoothing batter into cake pans, spreading apricot preserves, and, of course, applying that gorgeous chocolate glaze. Its angled blade gives you just the right amount of control to spread things evenly, particularly when you're guiding the warm chocolate glaze over the layers.

Strain apricot preserves with a **fine-mesh sieve** to remove any solids, ensuring a smooth and even spread. This step is crucial for achieving the silky texture that enhances the cake's overall flavor and consistency. If you're using a high-quality brand like Bonne Maman, you'll taste the difference—smooth and flavorful, with just the right amount of sweetness.

Two 8-inch **round cake pans** are the perfect size to achieve the height and texture this cake needs. Lining the bottoms with **parchment paper** is essential—this ensures the layers come out effortlessly without sticking.

A **wire rack** allows air to circulate around the cake layers, ensuring they cool evenly and don't become soggy. Placing the rack on a **rimmed baking sheet** helps to catch any glaze drips, keeping your counter clean and making cleanup a breeze.

A **pastry brush** is your secret weapon when it comes to applying simple syrup. Gently brushing the syrup onto the cake layers helps lock in moisture and enhances the flavor without overwhelming the chocolate.

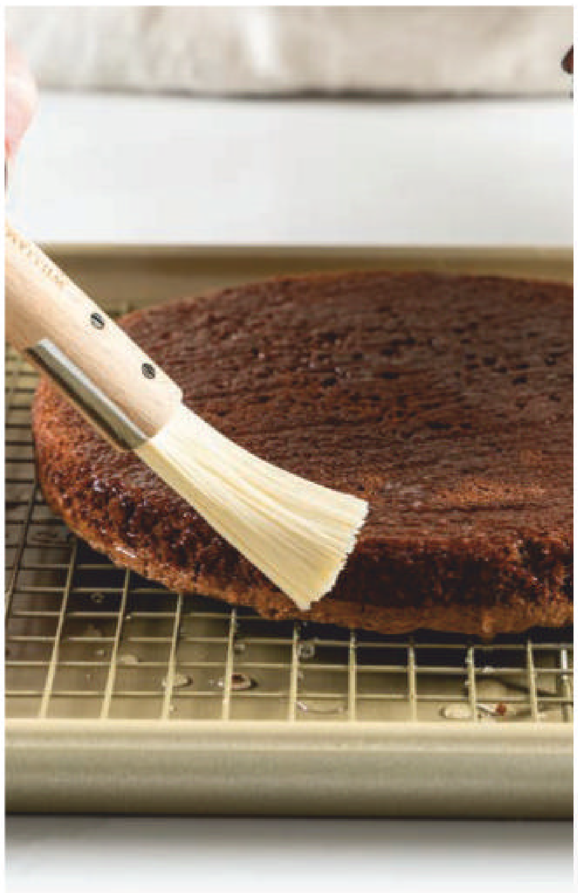
A **cake lifter** is a flat, wide spatula with a long handle that lets you move delicate cakes like Sacher-Torte with ease. The slim design slides under the cake without damaging it, making it ideal for transferring a cake that's as precious as this one.

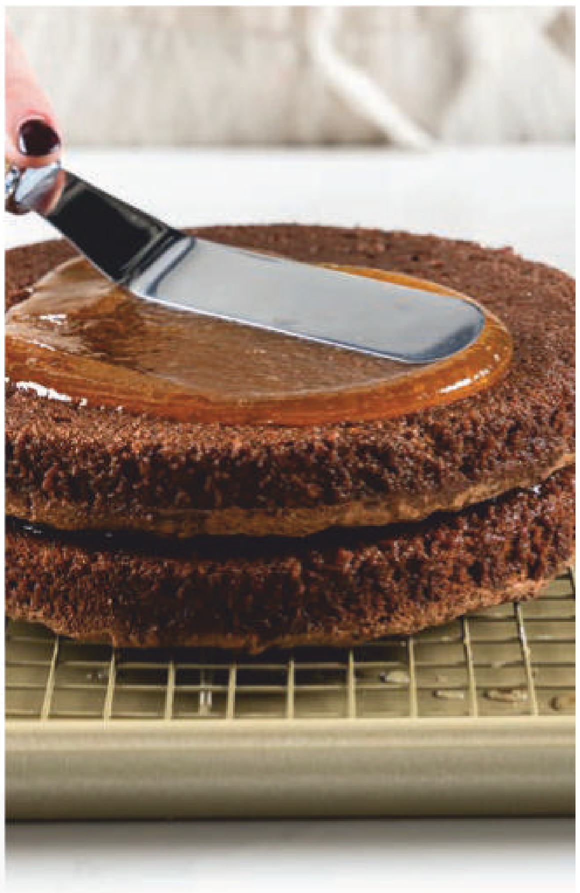
Silicone spatulas allow for gentle folding of the egg whites into the batter without deflating them—key to achieving the perfect light yet rich texture. Their flexibility ensures that every bit of chocolate mixture is incorporated smoothly, preventing streaks of unmixed ingredients. Plus, they're heat-resistant, making them ideal for stirring the chocolate glaze until it reaches the perfect glossy consistency.

Using a sturdy **liquid-measuring cup** with a handle makes pouring the warm chocolate glaze onto the cake effortless.

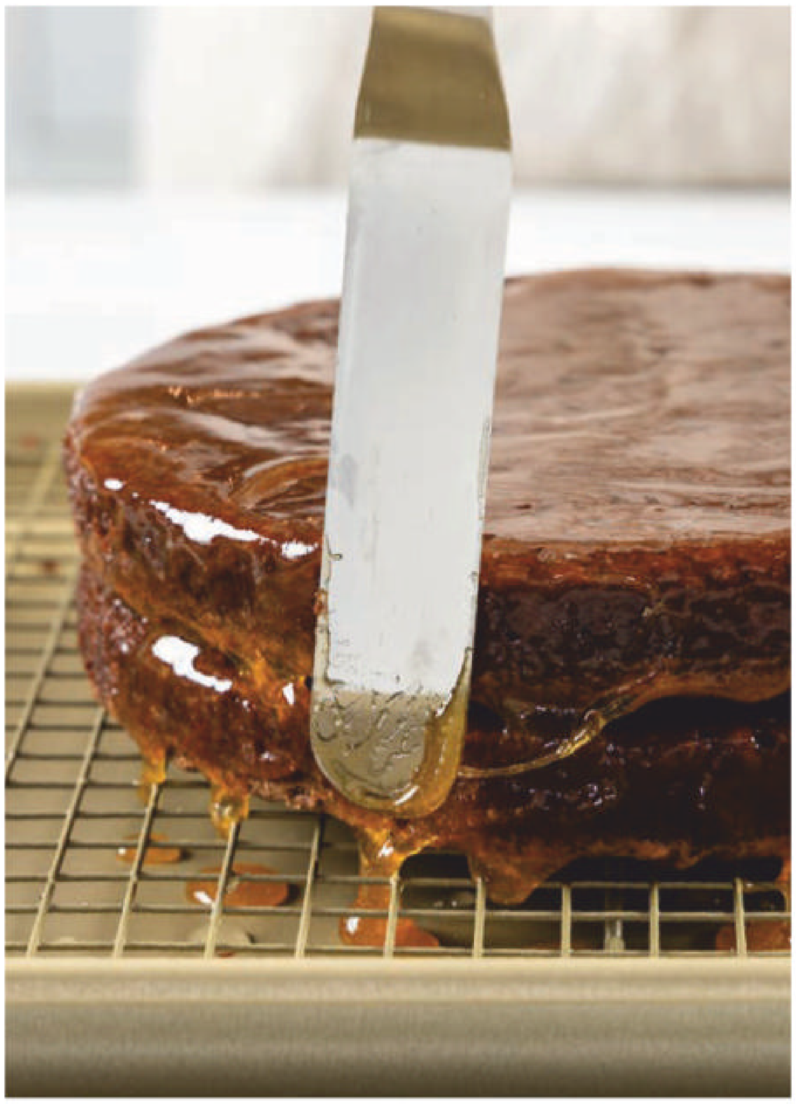
The Art of the Assembly

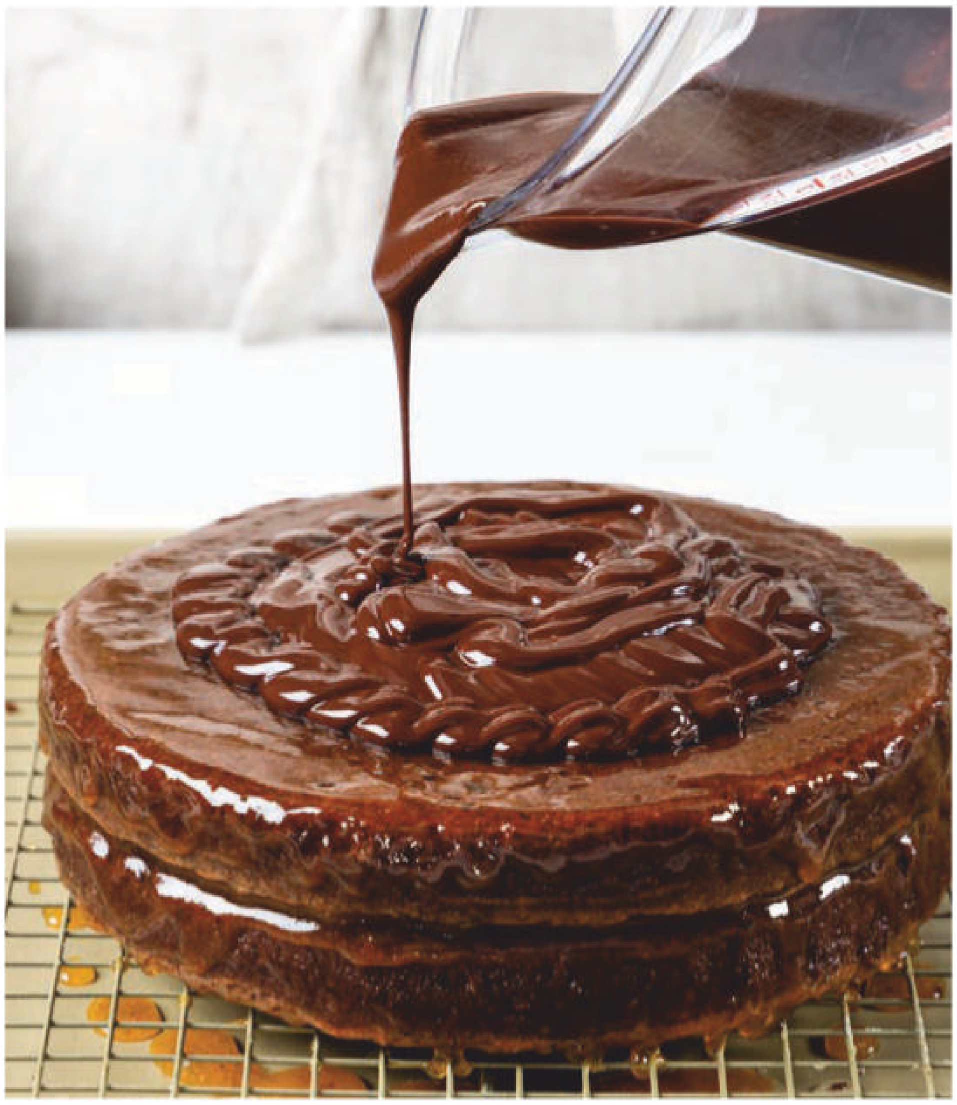
Transform your Sacher-Torte into a masterpiece with these essential steps and decoration tips

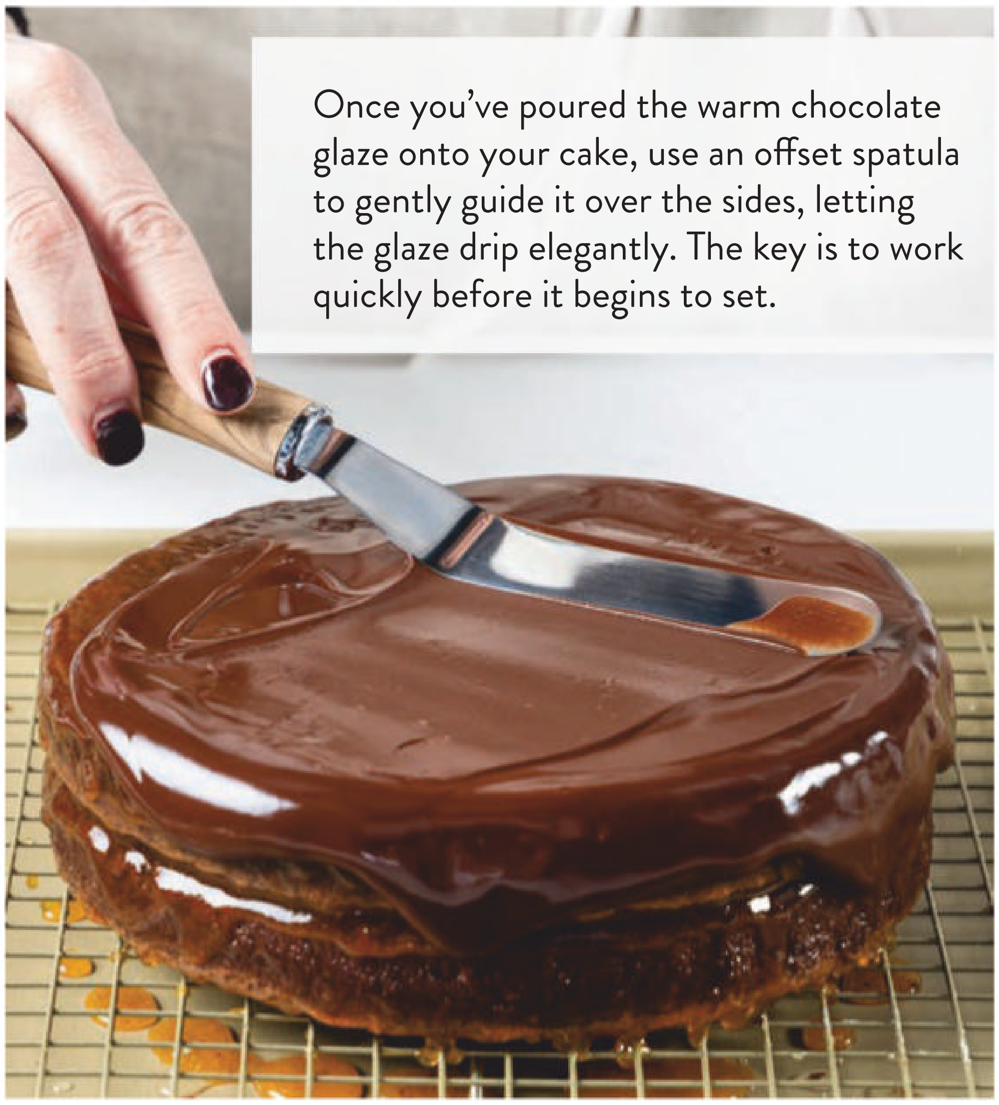




Brushing your cake layers with simple syrup not only adds moisture but also helps the apricot preserves adhere. This simple syrup will keep your cake layers light and tender, adding an extra depth of flavor.







Once you've poured the warm chocolate glaze onto your cake, use an offset spatula to gently guide it over the sides, letting the glaze drip elegantly. The key is to work quickly before it begins to set.

After the glaze has started to set but is still soft enough to cling, add a touch of elegance by adorning the bottom edge of the cake with chocolate sprinkles. This adds texture and a visual contrast to the smooth surface of the glaze.

Pipe a design on top of the cake once the glaze has firmed up a little. A timeless design is a series of swirls around the edges for a refined look. This is your chance to add a personal touch—whether simple or intricate, it's the perfect finishing detail.

While it may be tempting to cut into your Sacher-Torte right away, give it some time in the fridge to allow the glaze to firm up. This also enhances the flavors and texture, resulting in a perfect slice when you're ready to serve. ◼

Celebrate the early season's bounty with these juicy and jammy breads, bars, and pastries

Blueberry-Lime Loaf, PAGE 62

PHOTOGRAPHY BY KYLE CARPENTER AND STEPHANIE WELBOURNE STEELE
RECIPE DEVELOPMENT BY OLA AGBODZA AND AMANDA STABILE
FOOD STYLING BY KATIE MOON DICKERSON
STYLING BY MAGGIE RATLIFF

Fresh AND Fruity SUMMER BAKES

Blueberry Cobbler Bread, PAGE 61

NECTARINE TURNOVERS

Makes 12 pastries

The natural sweetness of nectarines shines through in these pastries, with a hint of vanilla and a touch of sugar to enhance their flavor. The lemon juice helps break down the fruit as it cooks while also bringing out the floral and citrus notes in nectarines. With a crisp pastry surrounding a warm, fruit-packed filling, these turnovers offer the perfect balance of texture and flavor.

1¾ cups (254 grams) chopped fresh nectarines (about 2 medium nectarines)
½ cup (100 grams) granulated sugar
2 teaspoons (10 grams) fresh lemon juice
¼ teaspoon kosher salt
2 tablespoons (16 grams) cornstarch
3 tablespoons (45 grams) water, divided
½ teaspoon (2 grams) vanilla extract
All-purpose flour, for dusting
Rough Puff Pastry Dough (recipe follows)
1 large egg (50 grams)

1. In a small saucepan, stir together nectarines, sugar, lemon juice, and salt. Cook over medium heat, stirring frequently, until fruit begins to break down and release juice, about 5 minutes.

2. In a small bowl, whisk together cornstarch and 2 tablespoons (30 grams) water until smooth. Add cornstarch mixture to nectarine mixture, and cook, stirring frequently, until mixture is thick and translucent, 2 to 3 minutes. Remove from heat, and stir in vanilla. Let cool completely.

3. Preheat oven to 400°F (200°C). Line 2 baking sheets with parchment paper.

4. On a lightly floured surface, roll Rough Puff Pastry Dough into a 16x12-inch rectangle. Cut into 12 (4-inch) squares. Spoon 1½ tablespoons (30 grams) nectarine mixture into center of each square.

5. In another small bowl, whisk together egg and remaining 1 tablespoon (15 grams) water. Using a pastry brush, brush edges of dough with egg wash. Fold squares in half diagonally, and crimp edges to seal. Place at least 1½ inches apart on prepared pans. Freeze until firm, about 15 minutes.

6. Using a small knife, cut 3 small vents in top of each pastry. (See Pro Tip.) Brush with egg wash.

7. Bake for 10 minutes. Reduce oven temperature to 375°F (190°C), and bake until golden brown, 10 to 15 minutes more. Let cool on pans for 10 minutes. Remove from pans, and let cool on wire racks for at least 15 minutes. Serve warm or at room temperature.

PRO TIP: To ensure the turnovers rise evenly and don't lose filling, gently score the fold of frozen turnovers with a sharp knife (without cutting all the way through). This will allow the pastry to rise and puff without popping open.

Rough Puff Pastry Dough

Makes 12 pastries

1⅓ cups (300 grams) cold unsalted butter, cubed
2¼ cups (281 grams) all-purpose flour, plus more for dusting
2 teaspoons (6 grams) kosher salt
½ cup (120 grams) ice water

1. Freeze cold butter until firm, 15 to 20 minutes.

2. In the bowl of a stand mixer fitted with the paddle attachment, beat cold butter, flour, and salt at low speed just until butter is coated with flour. With mixer on low speed, add ½ cup (120 grams) ice water in a slow, steady stream, beating just until dough comes together, about 1 minute, stopping to scrape sides of bowl and turn dough to help dough hydrate evenly. (There will still be large pieces of butter. It is OK if a few dry bits remain).

3. Turn out dough onto a lightly floured surface, and roll into a 7-inch square. Wrap in plastic wrap, and refrigerate for 45 minutes to 1 hour.

4. On a lightly floured surface, roll dough into an 18x10-inch rectangle, lightly flouring surface and top of dough as needed. Fold dough in thirds like a letter. Rotate dough 90 degrees; roll into an 18x10-inch rectangle, and fold in thirds like a letter. Repeat procedure for a third and final turn. Wrap dough in plastic wrap, and refrigerate for at least 1 hour. (If at any point the butter is too soft after a fold, wrap in plastic wrap, and freeze until butter is firm again, checking every 5 minutes.)

PICKING THE BEST FRUIT

When picking stone fruit, look for fruit that has a sweet, fragrant scent and is slightly soft, not hard, to the touch. The more vibrant the color, the riper the fruit. Avoid fruits that are bruised or have dark spots. Using clean needle-nose pliers makes quick work of removing the pit from larger stone fruit. Ripe, fresh blueberries should be plump and dark, with a slight silvery sheen. Blueberries with a purplish or reddish hue are not fully ripe.

BLUEBERRY COBBLER BREAD

Makes 1 (13x9-inch) loaf

This delightful twist on classic cobbler features a buttery brioche base topped with a zesty blueberry compote. The dough rises beautifully, creating a tender base that's perfect for absorbing juicy bursts of fresh blueberries in every bite. With a sweet, golden crumble on top and a hint of vanilla, this bread is more than just a treat—it's a showstopper for brunch or an indulgence with your afternoon coffee.

Dough:

½ **cup (120 grams) warm whole milk (110°F/43°C to 115°F/46°C)**
2¼ **teaspoons (7 grams) active dry yeast**
3 **tablespoons (36 grams) granulated sugar, divided**
2⅓ to 2⅔ **cups (292 to 334 grams) all-purpose flour, divided, plus more for dusting**
2 **teaspoons (6 grams) kosher salt**
2 **large eggs (100 grams), lightly beaten and room temperature**
½ **cup (113 grams) unsalted butter, cubed and room temperature**

Topping:

12 **ounces (340 grams) fresh blueberries, divided**
¼ **cup (50 grams) granulated sugar**
2 **tablespoons (16 grams) cornstarch**
½ **teaspoon (1 gram) lemon zest**
1 **tablespoon (15 grams) fresh lemon juice**
¼ **teaspoon kosher salt**
1 **teaspoon (4 grams) vanilla extract**

Crumble:

1 **cup (125 grams) all-purpose flour**
3 **tablespoons (36 grams) granulated sugar**
½ **teaspoon (1.5 grams) kosher salt**
¼ **cup (57 grams) unsalted butter, melted**
½ **teaspoon (2 grams) vanilla extract**

1. For dough: In a small bowl, stir together warm milk, yeast, and 1 teaspoon (4 grams) sugar. Let stand until foamy, about 5 minutes.

2. In the bowl of a stand mixer, whisk together 1⅓ cups (167 grams) flour, salt, and remaining 2 tablespoons plus 2 teaspoons (32 grams) sugar. Add yeast mixture and eggs. Using the paddle attachment, beat at low speed until combined, about 1 minute. With mixer on low speed, gradually add 1 cup (125 grams) flour, beating until a shaggy dough forms; scrape sides of bowl.

3. Switch to the dough hook attachment. Beat at medium-low speed until dough is smooth, elastic, and slightly tacky, 4 to 6 minutes; add up to remaining ⅓ cup (42 grams) flour, 1 tablespoon (8 grams) at a time, if dough is too sticky. With mixer on medium-low speed, add butter, 1 tablespoon (14 grams) at a time, beating until combined after each addition (6 to 7 minutes total). Beat at medium speed until a smooth, elastic dough forms, 10 to 12 minutes. Turn out onto a lightly floured surface; knead 5 to 8 times, and shape into a smooth round.

4. Lightly oil a large bowl. Place dough in bowl, turning to grease top. Cover and let rise in a warm, draft-free place (75°F/24°C) until doubled in size, 45 minutes to 1 hour.

5. For topping: In a large heavy-bottomed saucepan, bring 10 ounces (283 grams) blueberries, sugar, cornstarch, lemon zest and juice, and salt to a boil over medium heat, stirring frequently until sugar dissolves. Cook, stirring occasionally, until mixture is thickened, 8 to 10 minutes.

6. Transfer mixture to a heatproof bowl; stir in vanilla and remaining 2 ounces (57 grams) blueberries. Cover with plastic wrap, pressing wrap directly onto surface of mixture to prevent a skin from forming. Let cool completely.

7. Line a 13x9-inch baking pan with parchment paper, letting excess extend over sides of pan.

8. Punch down dough. Stretch and press dough into bottom of prepared pan. Cover with plastic wrap, and let rise in a warm, draft-free place (75°F/24°C) until slightly puffy, 30 to 40 minutes.

9. For crumble: In a medium bowl, whisk together flour, sugar, and salt until well combined. Add melted butter and vanilla, stirring with a fork until well combined and mixture forms medium-size clumps. Refrigerate for at least 20 minutes or until ready to use.

10. Preheat oven to 375°F (190°C).

11. Dollop topping all over dough; sprinkle crumble all over topping.

12. Bake until an instant-read thermometer inserted in center of bread registers 190°F (88°C), about 20 minutes. Let cool in pan for 10 minutes. Using excess parchment as handles, remove from pan, and let cool for 5 minutes. Serve warm. Store in an airtight container for up to 3 days.

BLUEBERRY-LIME LOAF

Makes 1 (8½x4½-inch) loaf

Topped with a swath of magenta frosting, this quick bread-meets-cake is bursting with flavor from first slice to last. Lime has a sharper, more intense acidity than lemon, which pairs beautifully with the sweet, juicy blueberries without overpowering them.

1⅓ cups (267 grams) granulated sugar
3 large eggs (150 grams), room temperature
2½ teaspoons (5 grams) lime zest
⅔ cup (149 grams) vegetable oil
½ cup (120 grams) sour cream, room temperature
1 teaspoon (4 grams) vanilla extract
2½ cups (313 grams) plus 1 tablespoon (8 grams) all-purpose flour, divided
2 teaspoons (10 grams) baking powder
1 teaspoon (3 grams) kosher salt
6 ounces (170 grams) fresh blueberries, divided
Blueberry-Lime Buttercream (recipe follows)
Garnish: fresh blueberries

1. Preheat oven to 350°F (180°C). Spray an 8½x4½-inch loaf pan with baking spray with flour; line pan with parchment paper, letting excess extend over all sides of pan.
2. In a large bowl, whisk together sugar, eggs, and lime zest until light and fluffy, about 2 minutes. Stir in oil, sour cream, and vanilla until well combined.
3. In medium bowl, whisk together 2½ cups (313 grams) flour, baking powder, and salt.
4. In a small bowl, toss together 4 ounces (113 grams) blueberries and remaining 1 tablespoon (8 grams) flour until blueberries are well coated.
5. In another small bowl, mash remaining 2 ounces (57 grams) blueberries with a fork.
6. Using a rubber spatula, fold flour mixture into sugar mixture until just until combined. Fold in all blueberries. Spoon batter into prepared pan, and spread smooth with a small offset spatula.
7. Bake for 40 minutes. Loosely cover with foil, and bake until a wooden pick inserted in center comes out clean, 35 to 45 minutes more. Let cool in pan for 10 minutes. Using excess parchment as handles, remove from pan, and let cool completely on a wire rack.
8. Spread Blueberry-Lime Buttercream onto loaf. Garnish with blueberries, if desired. Store in airtight container for up to 3 days.

Blueberry-Lime Buttercream

Makes about 1 cup

⅓ cup (49 grams) fresh blueberries
1 tablespoon (15 grams) plus 1 teaspoon (5 grams) fresh lime juice, divided
⅓ cup (75 grams) unsalted butter, softened
⅛ teaspoon kosher salt
1⅓ cups (160 grams) confectioners' sugar

1. In a small saucepan, bring blueberries and 1 tablespoon (15 grams) lime juice to a boil over medium heat; cook until blueberries begin to burst and release their juices, about 5 minutes. Reduce heat, and simmer until blueberries can be easily crushed with a rubber spatula, about 2 minutes.
2. Strain blueberries through a fine-mesh sieve into a small bowl, using a spatula to press down on blueberries to release liquid. Discard solids. Let liquid cool completely.
3. In a small bowl, stir together 1½ tablespoons (22 grams) cooled blueberry sauce and remaining 1 teaspoon (5 grams) lime juice.
4. In a medium bowl, beat butter and salt with a hand mixer at medium speed until creamy, about 1 minute, stopping to scrape sides of bowl. With mixer on low speed, gradually add confectioners' sugar alternately with blueberry mixture, beginning and ending with confectioners' sugar, beating just until combined after each addition. Scrape mixer attachment and bottom and sides of bowl. Beat at medium speed until fluffy, about 1 minute. Use immediately.

PLUM BAKEWELL BARS

Makes about 12 bars

These bars are a delicious twist on the classic British dessert Bakewell tart. With a buttery shortbread base, a layer of sweet stone fruit jam, and a creamy almond filling, they offer all the beloved flavors of the original tart but in a portable, easy-to-serve format.

Crust:

½ **cup (100 grams) granulated sugar**
½ **cup (113 grams) unsalted butter, melted and cooled slightly**
½ **teaspoon (2 grams) vanilla extract**
1½ **cups (188 grams) all-purpose flour**
¼ **teaspoon kosher salt**

Filling:

½ **cup (113 grams) unsalted butter, room temperature**
½ **cup (100 grams) granulated sugar**
2 **large eggs (100 grams), room temperature**
2 **teaspoons (8 grams) vanilla extract**
½ **teaspoon (1.5 grams) kosher salt**
¼ **teaspoon (1 gram) almond extract**
1½ **cups (144 grams) almond flour**
3 **tablespoons (24 grams) all-purpose flour**
1 **cup (300 grams) Plum Jam (recipe follows)**
2 **tablespoons (16 grams) sliced almonds**

Glaze:

¾ **cup (90 grams) confectioners' sugar**
4 **teaspoons (20 grams) water**

1. Preheat oven to 350°F (180°C). Spray a 9-inch square baking pan with baking spray with flour. Line pan with parchment paper, letting excess extend over all sides of pan.
2. For crust: In a medium bowl, whisk together granulated sugar, melted butter, and vanilla. Add all-purpose flour and salt, and stir until a dough forms. Press into bottom of prepared pan. Using a fork, dock bottom of dough.
3. Bake until surface is set, 20 to 25 minutes. Leave oven on.
4. For filling: In the bowl of a stand mixer fitted with the paddle attachment, beat butter and granulated sugar at medium speed until light and creamy, 2 to 3 minutes, stopping to scrape sides of bowl. Add eggs, one at a time, beating well after each addition and stopping to scrape sides of bowl. Beat in vanilla, salt, and almond extract. With mixer on low speed, gradually add almond flour and all-purpose flour, beating until just combined.
5. Spread Plum Jam onto prepared crust. Top with almond mixture, gently spreading to edges. Sprinkle sliced almonds on top.
6. Bake until filling is set and golden brown and a wooden pick inserted in center comes out clean, about 30 minutes. Let cool completely in pan on a wire rack. Using excess parchment as handles, remove from pan.
7. For glaze: In a small bowl, whisk together confectioners' sugar and 4 teaspoons (20 grams) water until smooth.
8. Cut into bars, and drizzle with glaze. Let stand until glaze is set, about 10 minutes. Refrigerate in an airtight container for up to 3 days.

Plum Jam

Makes 2 cups

2 **pounds (907 grams) fresh plums, chopped**
1 **cup (200 grams) granulated sugar**
¼ **cup (60 grams) water**
2 **teaspoons (8 grams) vanilla extract**

1. In a medium heavy-bottomed saucepan, bring plums, sugar, and ¼ cup (60 grams) water to boil over medium-high heat, stirring occasionally until sugar dissolves. Reduce heat to low, and cook for 30 minutes, stirring every 5 minutes. Remove from heat.
2. Transfer mixture to the container of a blender. Secure lid on blender, and remove center piece of lid to let steam escape; place a clean towel over opening in lid to avoid splatters. Blend until smooth.
3. Return mixture to saucepan, and cook over low heat, stirring frequently, until mixture is thick, 10 to 15 minutes. Remove from heat, stir in vanilla, and let cool completely. Refrigerate in an airtight container for up to 1 week. b

THE RISE OF SMALL STATE PROVISIONS

BY AMBER WILSON
PHOTOGRAPHY BY STEPHANIE WELBOURNE STEELE

Kevin Masse has always been drawn to the kitchen, where the rhythm of cooking and baking was at the heart of his upbringing. Growing up in Syracuse, New York, the kitchen was a lively place every night as the family gathered around the table, with quality ingredients always at the center of their meals. His Italian grandmother, too, played a key role in igniting his deep love for food. It was by her side that he first learned to bake with fresh dough, as she lovingly crafted her homemade pizzas for the family to enjoy.

"I think the first time I cooked dinner for my family, I was probably 10 or 11 years old," Kevin recalls. "It has always been a part of my life." His love for the precision and methodical nature of baking grew in high school, though he never imagined it would turn into a career.

For years, baking stayed a cherished hobby. Even while he worked in marketing and media in New York City, Kevin found time to bake for dinner parties and office gatherings. A serendipitous shift into food media reignited his passion for baking. During this time, he worked with *Bake from Scratch*, developing content partnerships with many of the brands that continue to collaborate with the publication today. This also led to him contributing the cover recipe to the May/June 2017 issue, a moment that foreshadowed his future in the baking world.

From a home kitchen to a thriving bakery, Kevin Masse's Small State Provisions in Hartford, Connecticut, embodies what it means to bake with heart

In 2019, Kevin's journey took a pivotal turn. After relocating from New York City to the Hartford, Connecticut, area with his husband, Michael, a professor at Trinity College, Kevin secured one of West Hartford's first cottage food licenses—just as it became legal for home bakers to sell directly to consumers. About the same time, he was gifted a sourdough starter by his friend cookbook author Terry Walters. This starter—and the sourdough techniques she shared with him—became the foundation of Small State Provisions.

"I started making a couple of loaves a week," Kevin says. "I was baking in Dutch ovens at home, selling on a subscription model." Customers signed up for eight-week sessions, during which Kevin delivered fresh loaves straight to their doors. It was a small, sustainable operation—until everything changed in March 2020.

When the COVID-19 pandemic hit, contactless delivery became a necessity, and Kevin adapted quickly, baking and dropping off loaves at customers' homes. "I had this moment where I thought, 'I can either stop doing this or lean in and make it work,'" he says. He chose the latter, and before long, Small State Provisions outgrew his home kitchen. He converted part of his house into a bakery, setting up a shaping table, a bread oven, and a 40-quart spiral mixer.

By the end of 2020, it was clear this was no longer just a side project. With several full-time employees relying on him, Kevin made the leap to full-time bakery owner. The bakery's first retail location, a cozy 200-square-foot space, opened in July 2021. It quickly became apparent they needed more room. In July 2023, Small State Provisions moved into a larger space, expanding into a full café experience and increased production.

Behind this success is a true family effort. His husband helped get the bakery off the ground, while his dad is Chief Technology Officer, his stepmom is Chief Financial Officer, and his stepdad is his accountant. "It really does take a village to open a bakery and grow it," Kevin says. "And I'm so grateful for mine."

But Small State Provisions isn't just about making great bread and pastries—it's about creating a space where customers feel seen and valued. "We greet every customer as if they were family," Kevin says. "We get to know them, their kids' names, their orders. It's not just a transaction; it's about connection."

That sense of hospitality extends to his team as well. Kevin created a set of core values—his own version of the Ten Commandments—to ensure his employees feel supported. "Family comes first, second, and third," he explains. "I want my team to know that their personal lives matter, that we respect their time and commitments outside of work."

From the start, Small State Provisions has focused on high-quality, organic ingredients. "When you're only working with flour, salt, and water, you have to pay attention to the details," Kevin says. His team sources organic grains whenever possible, including locally milled rye flour from a small producer in Hadley, Massachusetts. "We try to work with small, local providers first before turning to national ones," he says. "It's about supporting our community."

Kevin's commitment to quality extends to his other baked goods, too. The bakery started with just two types of cookies and one scone, but today, the pastry case overflows with butter croissants, chocolate croissants, almond croissants, banana bread, and more. If you visit the bakery, three must-try items are his chewy gingerbread cookies, signature sourdough, and never-too-sweet blueberry scones.

Now, Small State Provisions has two locations and employs more than 30 people, a mix of full- and part-time staff. Some of them are high school students getting their first taste of the working world—something Kevin loves to support, inspired by his own teenage job at regional supermarket Wegmans. "I love that we can offer a space where young people can learn the art of hospitality," he says. "They're part of something bigger here."

While Kevin still spends time in the production kitchen, his role has evolved. A leadership course with the Bread Bakers Guild of America introduced him to the concept of working from "the balcony"—stepping back to oversee operations rather than being hands-on in production. "It's a transition I'm working through," he admits. "But I love leading the team and making sure they feel supported."

Through all the growth and success, Kevin's love for baking remains unchanged. "It's still magical to me," he says. "Taking something raw, putting it in the oven, and pulling out something completely transformed—it never gets old."

His personal favorites? The bakery's sourdough baguettes, which remind him of his travels to Paris. He also loves the focaccia, baked in a square pan with extra-virgin olive oil, rosemary, and sea salt. "That one's really special," he says. "It's simple but perfect."

Connecticut, the third-smallest state in the country, inspired the name Small State Provisions. While the name reflects the state's size, the bakery itself represents something much bigger: a business that has grown from a small cottage operation into a cornerstone of its community, built on the values of quality, connection, and care—one thoughtfully crafted loaf at a time.

BLUEBERRY-OAT SCONES

Makes 12 scones

Recipe by Kevin Masse, Small State Provisions

These hearty scones are the perfect combination of tender, flaky texture and bold, juicy blueberries. This recipe comes from Kevin Masse at Small State Provisions, who emphasizes strength over gentleness when it comes to mixing the dough—don't be afraid to get your hands in there! It's meant to be a little rugged, with some dry, crumbly spots, which are perfectly fine and add to the scones' charm. Just be sure not to overwork the dough or the blueberries might burst, leaving you with a soggy mess. The result? Golden, crisp-edged scones with a soft interior, speckled with bursts of blueberry goodness.

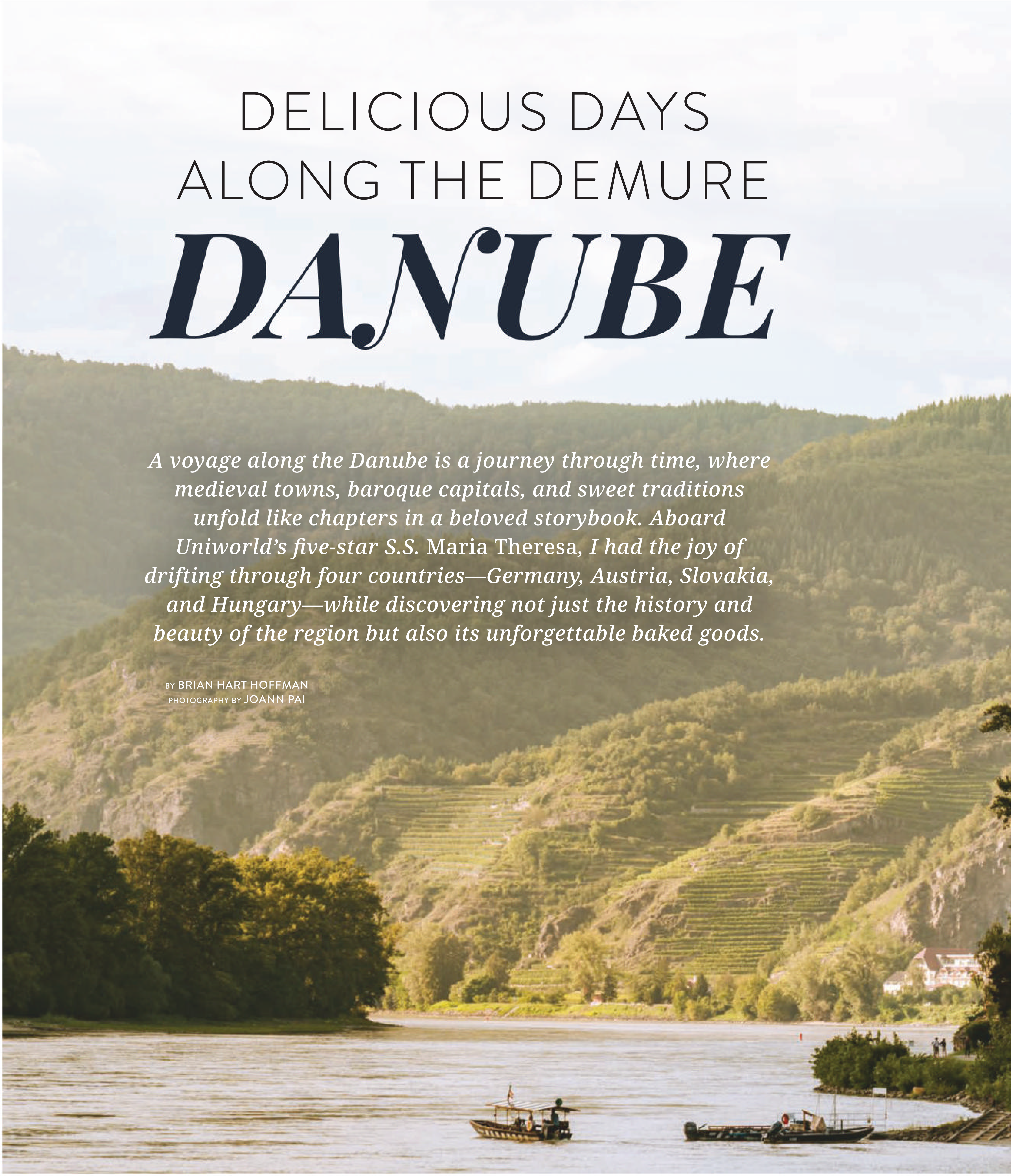
3⅔ cups (458 grams) whole wheat flour
1¼ cups (113 grams) oat flour
⅔ cup (133 grams) granulated sugar
2 teaspoons (10 grams) baking powder
1½ teaspoons (8 grams) baking soda
¾ teaspoon (2.25 grams) kosher salt
1¼ cups (284 grams) cold unsalted butter, cubed
1¾ cups (250 grams) frozen organic blueberries
1½ cups (150 grams) thick-cut old-fashioned oats
¾ cup (180 grams) whole buttermilk, plus more for brushing
2 large eggs (100 grams)
2 teaspoons (8 grams) vanilla extract
Turbinado sugar, for sprinkling

1. Line a large baking sheet with parchment paper.
2. In the work bowl of a food processor, process flours, granulated sugar, baking powder, baking soda, and salt until fine. Add cold butter, and process until butter is very fine but still visible.
3. Transfer flour mixture to a large bowl, and add blueberries and oats, tossing until combined.
4. In a small bowl, whisk together buttermilk, eggs, and vanilla. Pour over flour mixture, and work with your hands until a dough is formed. Divide dough into 12 portions (120 to 125 grams each), and press each into a tight ball. (A large spring-loaded scoop works well.) Place, evenly spaced, on prepared pan.
5. Preheat oven to 400°F (200°C).
6. Brush buttermilk onto dough, and sprinkle with turbinado sugar.
7. Bake until golden brown, 20 to 23 minutes. Let cool on pan for 5 minutes; serve warm. Store in an airtight container for up to 2 days.

PRO TIP: *Unbaked scones can be frozen in a heavy-duty resealable plastic bag for up to 1 month. Bake them from frozen, adding 5 to 10 minutes to the bake time.*

SMALL
STATE
PROVISIONS

➔ Find them on Instagram (@smallstate), Facebook (@SmallStateProvisions), and at *smallstateprovisions.com*.

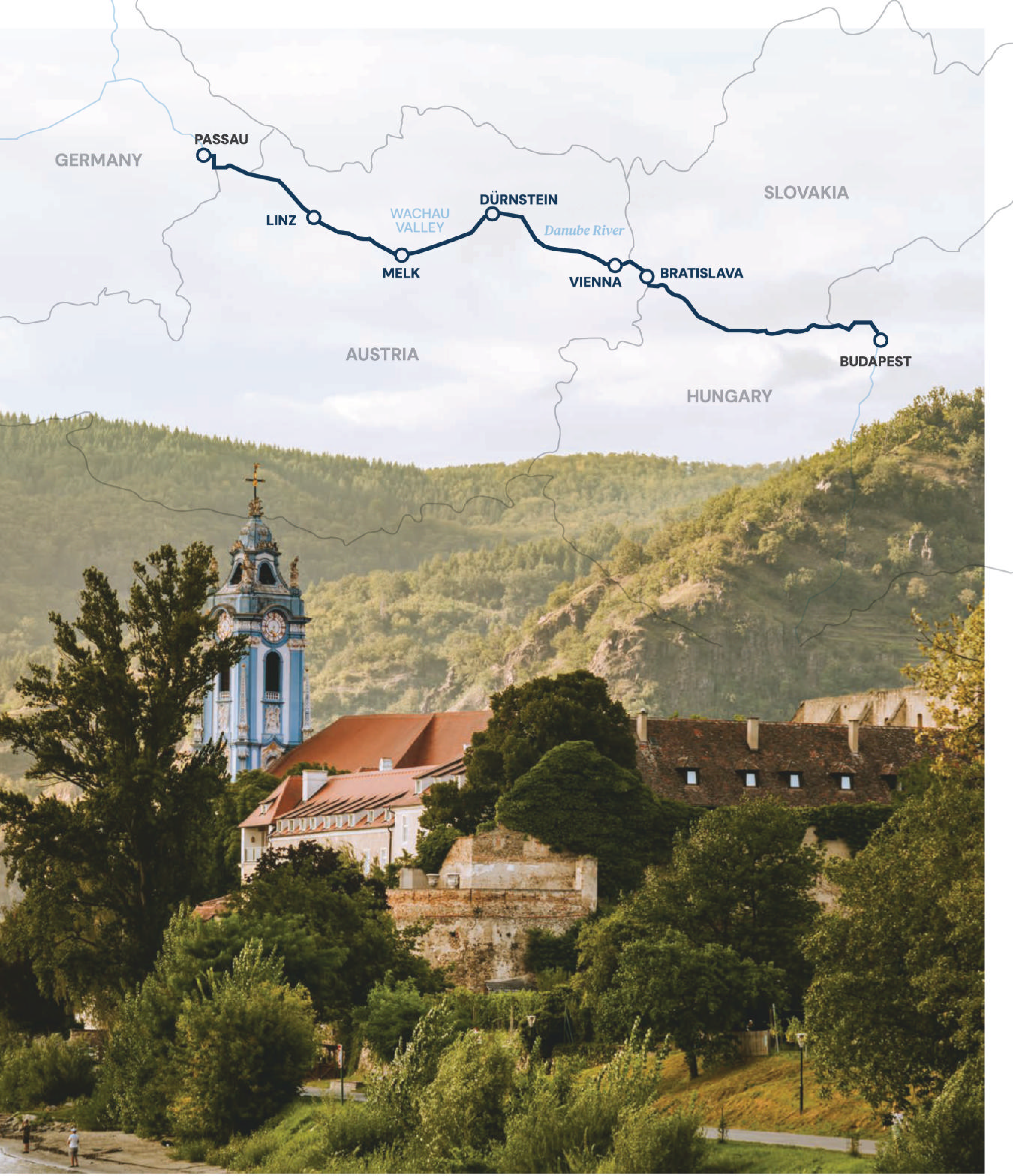


DELICIOUS DAYS ALONG THE DEMURE

DANUBE

A voyage along the Danube is a journey through time, where medieval towns, baroque capitals, and sweet traditions unfold like chapters in a beloved storybook. Aboard Uniworld's five-star S.S. Maria Theresa, *I had the joy of drifting through four countries—Germany, Austria, Slovakia, and Hungary—while discovering not just the history and beauty of the region but also its unforgettable baked goods.*

BY BRIAN HART HOFFMAN
PHOTOGRAPHY BY JOANN PAI


PASSAU
GERMANY
LINZ
WACHAU VALLEY
DÜRNSTEIN
Danube River
MELK
VIENNA
BRATISLAVA
SLOVAKIA
AUSTRIA
BUDAPEST
HUNGARY

Drifting along the storied waters of the Danube River aboard the Uniworld S.S. *Maria Theresa* is a journey through history, culture, and—most delightfully—pastry. From the moment I stepped onto the ship, with its regal chandeliers and old-world elegance, I knew this would be no ordinary cruise. The *Maria Theresa*, named for the great Habsburg empress, offers an experience steeped in European opulence, complete with world-class cuisine that reflects the regions along the waterway's path. But as much as I marveled at the grandeur of the ship, it was the baked goods—both onboard and ashore—that truly captured my heart.

My French balcony stateroom was a dream—a cozy haven with floor-to-ceiling windows that opened onto the ever-changing views of the Danube. From sunrise to twilight, I watched castle-topped hills and riverside villages drift by from the comfort of my bed or curled up with a book. The lounge spaces onboard were equally inviting—sumptuous armchairs, curated artwork, and the soft hum of conversation creating the perfect backdrop for sipping a cocktail and letting the scenery unfold. Most evenings, you'd find me at the Bar du Leopard with a Manhattan in hand, the sunset casting a golden glow through the windows as the river slipped quietly past. Whether enjoying a glass of Grüner Veltliner or a classic Kir Royale, every moment felt touched by a quiet, cinematic glamour.

Clockwise from top left, Breathtaking Budapest, Hungary, at night; a charming wine shop in the town of Dürnstein, Austria; the main square in Linz, Austria; and Konditorei Kormuth in Bratislava, Slovakia.

Sailing from Passau, Germany, to Budapest, Hungary, each port revealed a treasure trove of confections that told their own delicious tales. In **Passau**, a charming Bavarian town, I indulged in buttery *Nusskipferl*, crescent-shaped pastries filled with hazelnuts, their golden edges still warm from the oven. I also stopped at Simon Confiserie, a beloved local bakery, for its honey gingerbread—moist, spiced just right, and deeply fragrant with clove and cinnamon. The honey gave it a mellow sweetness that lingered long after the last crumb.

DANUBE WAVE CAKE

Makes 1 (9-inch) cake

This quintessential German dessert known as Donauwelle Kuchen captures the essence of the Danube River with its signature wavelike patterns—both in the marbled layers of vanilla and chocolate cake and in the arrangement of juicy sour cherries. The cake's striking appearance has earned it another nickname, Snow White cake or Schneewittchenkuchen, *referencing the snowy white cake layers contrasted against the dark chocolate swirls and vibrant red cherries and inspired by the Snow White character in the Brothers Grimm fairy tales. The technique for creating the wave pattern is simple yet impressive: dolloping chocolate batter onto vanilla batter, creating a layered effect that stays distinct during baking. The tangy cherries are gently pressed into the batter, giving the cake a burst of flavor and color. Once baked, a luscious German buttercream tops the cake, followed by a glossy chocolate ganache. The result is a dessert that's as beautiful as it is delicious.*

Cake:

¾ cup (170 grams) unsalted butter, room temperature
1 cup (200 grams) granulated sugar
2 large eggs (100 grams), room temperature
1½ teaspoons (6 grams) vanilla extract
2 cups (250 grams) all-purpose flour
2 teaspoons (10 grams) baking powder
½ teaspoon (1.5 grams) kosher salt
½ cup (120 grams) plus 2 tablespoons (30 grams) whole milk, divided
3 tablespoons (15 grams) Dutch process cocoa powder
1⅔ cups (255 grams) drained canned or jarred pitted sour cherries in water or light syrup

German Buttercream (recipe follows)

Topping:

¼ cup (60 grams) heavy whipping cream, room temperature
2.5 ounces (70 grams) semisweet chocolate, chopped
1 tablespoon (14 grams) unsalted butter, softened

1. Preheat oven to 350°F (180°C). Lightly spray a 9-inch square baking pan with baking spray with flour. Line pan with parchment paper, letting excess extend over all sides of pan.
2. For cake: In the bowl of a stand mixer fitted with the paddle attachment, beat butter and sugar at medium speed until light and fluffy, 3 to 4 minutes, stopping to scrape sides of bowl. Add eggs, one at a time, beating well after each addition. Beat in vanilla.
3. In a medium bowl, whisk together flour, baking powder, and salt. With mixer on low speed, gradually add flour mixture to butter mixture alternately with ½ cup (120 grams) milk, beating until just combined after each addition and stopping to scrape sides of bowl. Spread about two-thirds of batter (2⅓ cups or 570 grams) into an even layer in prepared pan.
4. Add cocoa and remaining 2 tablespoons (30 grams) milk to remaining batter, and fold until just combined. Dollop chocolate batter onto vanilla batter in pan, and spread into an even layer (try not to swirl batters together). Press cherries, evenly spaced, into top of batter.
5. Bake until a wooden pick inserted in center comes out clean, about 40 minutes, rotating pan halfway through baking. Let cool completely in pan on a wire rack.
6. Spread German Buttercream onto cooled cake. Cover with plastic wrap, and refrigerate for at least 2 hours or up to overnight.
7. For topping: In a microwave-safe bowl, heat cream, chocolate, and butter on high in 20-second intervals, stirring between each, until chocolate and butter are completely melted and mixture is smooth; let cool for 5 minutes. Pour onto cake, and spread into an even layer; using an offset spatula, gently spread topping into a wave pattern if desired. Refrigerate until topping is set, about 20 minutes.
8. Using excess parchment as handles, remove cake from pan before serving. Refrigerate in an airtight container for up to 2 days.

German Buttercream

Makes about 2½ cups

⅔ cup (133 grams) granulated sugar
2 tablespoons (16 grams) cornstarch
1 teaspoon (3 grams) kosher salt
1 large egg (50 grams)
1 large egg yolk (19 grams)
¾ cup (180 grams) whole milk
1 teaspoon (6 grams) vanilla bean paste
1⅓ cups (303 grams) unsalted butter, softened

1. In a large bowl, whisk together sugar, cornstarch, and salt. Whisk in egg and egg yolk until well combined, stopping to scrape sides of bowl.
2. In a medium saucepan, heat milk over medium heat, stirring frequently, until steaming. (Do not boil.) Gradually whisk warm milk into sugar mixture. Pour sugar mixture into saucepan; cook over medium heat, whisking constantly, until thickened, slightly lumpy, and beginning to bubble, about 4 minutes. Cook, whisking constantly, for 2 minutes. Remove from heat. Whisk in vanilla bean paste. (Mixture should now be smooth again.) Pour into a large baking dish, spreading into a thin layer. Cover with plastic wrap, pressing wrap directly onto surface of custard to prevent a skin from forming. Refrigerate until thoroughly chilled, about 1 hour.
3. Let custard stand at room temperature for 40 minutes; stir until smooth and softened.
4. In the bowl of a stand mixer fitted with the paddle attachment, beat butter at medium speed until light, smooth, and creamy, about 4 minutes, stopping to scrape sides of bowl. Add custard, 1 to 2 tablespoons (16 to 32 grams) at a time, beating until combined after each addition and stopping to scrape sides of bowl.
5. Switch to the whisk attachment. Beat at medium speed until light and fluffy, 3 to 4 minutes. Use immediately, or refrigerate in an airtight container for up to 1 week. If refrigerating, let come to room temperature and rewhip until fluffy and light before using.

WANT TO CRUISE THE DANUBE WITH US?

Our 2025 Danube River cruise baking retreat quickly sold out, but we'd love to know if you're interested in baking and cruising with us in 2026.

→ **Email events@bakefromscratch.com.**

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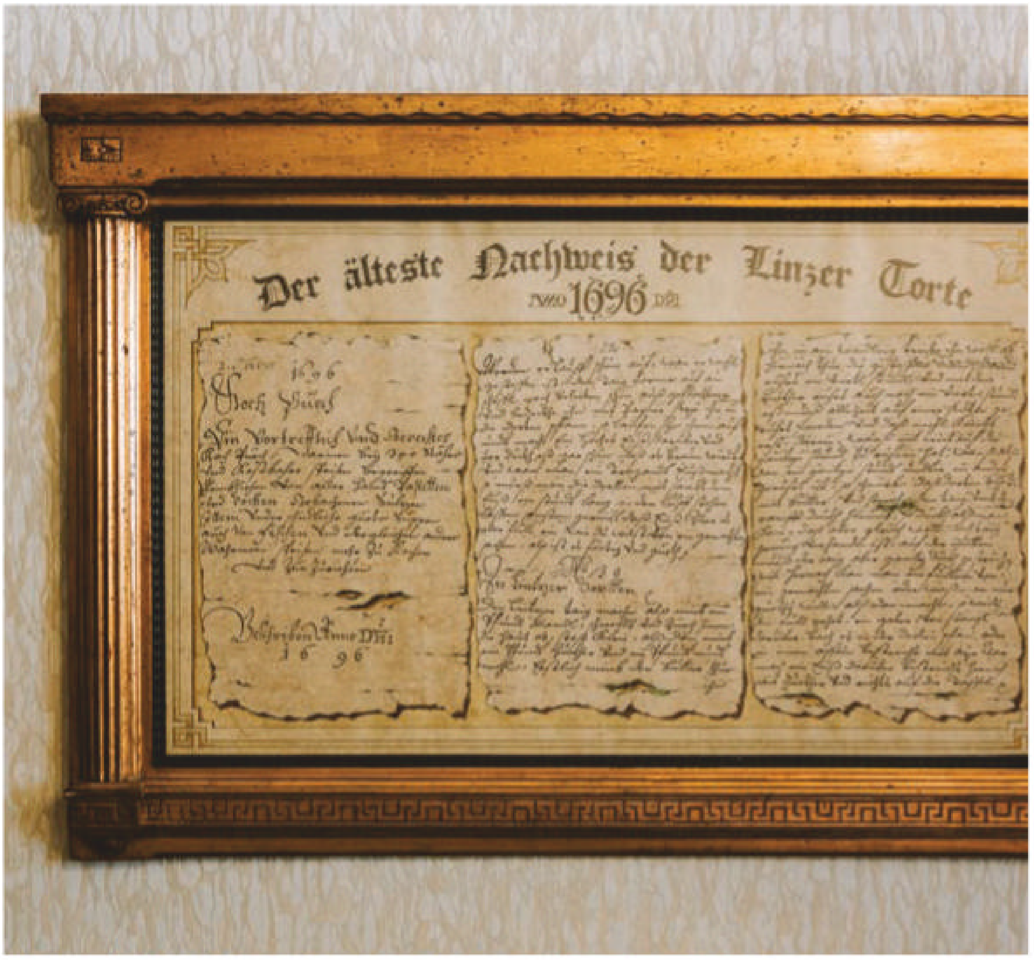
In **Linz, Austria**, the famed Linzer torte awaited—a delicate lattice-topped tart made with ground almonds and filled with tangy red currant jam that struck the perfect balance between sweet and sharp. I had the pleasure of visiting Konditorei Jindrak, renowned for its "Original Linzer Torte." Established more than 80 years ago, Jindrak has become synonymous with this iconic pastry, baking more than 100,000 tortes annually. The Linzer torte, considered the world's oldest known cake, dates back to a 1653 recipe, and Jindrak's version stays true to tradition.

EIS DES TAGES
KONDITOREI LEO JINDRAK
SEIT 1929


Der älteste Nachweis der Linzer Torte
Anno 1696 Dni

Winding into the Austrian hills near Linz, our Uniworld excursion brought us to Lamahof, a family-run farm where cider-making and charm go hand in hand. Set among rolling orchards, this peaceful retreat offered not only a chance to sample crisp, golden-hued Austrian cider—made from apples harvested just steps away—but also the unexpected joy of meeting the farm's namesake llamas. Friendly and curious, the llamas lounged in the sun as we sipped our glasses and soaked in the panoramic views. It was a perfect blend of refreshment and rustic delight.

LINZER TORTE

Makes 1 (9-inch) torte

This classic Linzer torte, originating from Austria and particularly associated with the charming town of Linz, is a perfect balance of buttery, nutty pastry and sweet, tart jam. With hazelnut flour providing depth and richness to the dough, this dessert is a true testament to the region's affinity for nuts, which are often a central ingredient in Austrian baking. The torte's signature lattice crust is not just a beautiful touch; it allows the bright jam to shine through, offering a tart contrast to the rich, spiced dough. The blend of warm spices with a hint of lemon zest evokes the classic flavors of European holiday baking, making this torte equally at home on a festive table or for an afternoon treat. The dough, though rich with butter, is lightened by the airy structure of whipped eggs and baking powder, creating a tender base that perfectly complements the fruit-filled center.

cover recipe

2½	**cups (313 grams) all-purpose flour, plus more for dusting**
1⅔	**cups (200 grams) confectioners' sugar**
1⅓	**cups (128 grams) hazelnut flour**
1	**teaspoon (5 grams) baking powder**
½	**teaspoon (1.5 grams) kosher salt**
½	**teaspoon (1 gram) ground cinnamon**
½	**teaspoon (1 gram) lemon zest**
¼	**teaspoon ground cloves**
1	**cup (227 grams) unsalted butter, softened**
3	**large eggs (150 grams), room temperature and divided**
½	**teaspoon (2 grams) vanilla extract**
1	**cup (320 grams) red currant or raspberry jam**
⅓	**cup (38 grams) sliced almonds**

1. In the bowl of a stand mixer, whisk together all-purpose flour, confectioners' sugar, hazelnut flour, baking powder, salt, cinnamon, lemon zest, and cloves by hand. Add butter, 2 eggs (100 grams), and vanilla; using the paddle attachment, slowly increase mixer speed to medium-low, and beat until combined and a dough forms, 3 to 4 minutes. Turn out dough onto plastic wrap. Flatten, wrap in plastic wrap, and refrigerate until firm, at least 2 hours, or up to overnight.

2. Preheat oven to 350°F (180°C). Lightly spray a 9-inch springform pan with baking spray with flour. Line bottom of pan with parchment paper.

3. Lightly dust work surface with all-purpose flour; turn out dough onto prepared surface. Reserve one-fourth of dough (about 240 grams). Roll remaining dough into a 10-inch circle (about ½ inch thick). Gently transfer dough circle to prepared pan, pressing into bottom and ½ inch up sides of pan. Spread jam in an even layer in prepared crust.

4. Divide reserved dough (about 240 grams) into 8 portions (about 30 grams each). Roll each portion into a 9-inch-long strip (about ⅜ inch thick). Place 4 strips, evenly spaced apart, onto jam. Place remaining 4 strips perpendicularly on top of first 4 strips, evenly spaced apart, to create a lattice pattern. Press top and bottom crusts together; trim off any excess dough.

5. In a small bowl, whisk remaining 1 egg (50 grams); brush onto edges of torte, and sprinkle with sliced almonds.

6. Bake until crust is golden brown and jam begins to bubble, 45 to 50 minutes. Let cool in pan for 10 minutes. Run a knife along edge of torte, and remove sides of pan. Let cool completely on a wire rack. Refrigerate in an airtight container for up to 3 days.

Melk, Austria, known for its soaring Benedictine abbey, tempted me with *Schaumrollen*—crisp, golden pastry spiraled into a delicate cone and filled with sweetened whipped cream or meringue—from Café-Braun. I had both fillings, of course. Each bite was a contrast of crunch and cloud, light yet indulgent. This small town can easily capture a baker's heart—how could it not with aprons strung over the streets, creating a deliciously festive atmosphere.

Cafe
Kafe Fürst
Cafe Restaurant Zimmer
Restaurant zum Fürsten

Braun

Schloss
Dürnstein
GASTHOF CAFE

In the picturesque town of **Dürnstein, Austria**, I discovered *Wachauer Marillenknödel*—pillowy apricot-filled dumplings dusted with sugar and toasted bread crumbs, still warm and fragrant from the kitchen. But Dürnstein holds another, more unexpected culinary treasure: saffron. One of the few regions in Europe where the spice is still cultivated, the Wachau Valley has a centuries-old history of saffron-farming that had sadly vanished over the years. I visited a local producer, Bernhard Kaar of Wachauer Safranmanufaktur, nestled among the terraced vineyards, where the delicate crocus flowers bloom in vibrant purple rows. I only wish that I had been there during the harvest. It is a painstaking process of harvesting each crimson stigma (thread) by hand—a meticulous task requiring thousands of blossoms for just a few precious grams. Local chefs use the spice with reverence, infusing it into both savory dishes and sweet creations. My favorite? A chocolate bar filled with saffron cream—truly showcasing the flavor-enhancing power of saffron with the chocolate.

SACHER

Hotel Sacher

Vienna, Austria, with its grand cafés and scent of espresso in the air, was a paradise of indulgence, where I relished the classic Sacher-Torte—a rich chocolate cake layered with apricot jam, served with a generous dollop of whipped cream. My first stop was the Hotel Sacher, where I knew my time spent waiting in the line would be rewarded with a slice of the famed cake, and it was delightful! But the baking exploration of this city, famed in the baking world for its deep ties to *viennoiserie*, was just beginning.

Viennoiserie, the category of baked goods that bridges the gap between pastry and bread, has its roots firmly planted in Vienna. Think buttery croissants, *pain au chocolat*, and brioche—all born from a style that emphasizes rich doughs, laminated layers, and that unmistakable golden sheen. While the French may have perfected the croissant, it was the Austrians who inspired it. Legend has it that after the defeat of the Ottoman Empire at the Siege of Vienna in 1683, Viennese bakers created the crescent-shaped *Kipferl* as a nod to the moon on the Ottoman flag. Over time, this evolved into the croissant we know today. In Vienna, viennoiserie still thrives, appearing in everything from bakery windows to the menus in cafés. Every flake, every swirl of dough, tells a story of craftsmanship and cultural exchange—and every bite is a reminder of the city's lasting influence on the global language of baking. In that vein, I had to visit the oldest bakery in the city, Bäckerei Arthur Grimm, established in 1536. Known for high-quality pastries and breads made in the Viennese tradition, this bakery has been family-run for generations and is definitely worth visiting while touring the historic city center.

ARTHUR GRIMM
Grimm
GRIMM

CAFE CENTRAL
CAFE CENTRAL

ALTE LEOPOL

WHAT IS VIENNOISERIE?

Viennoiserie, rooted in the traditions of Vienna, Austria, offers a beautiful blend of pastry and bread. The term “viennoiserie” itself derives from “Vienna,” where it was perfected in the 19th century. Though the iconic buttery croissant is often associated with France, it was in Vienna that the dough for these pastries was first developed and popularized. Viennoiseries are characterized by their use of yeast-leavened doughs and an incorporation of rich butters, sugars, and eggs, which result in a tender, flaky texture that melts in the mouth. Whether it’s a stroll along the riverbanks or indulging in the city’s pastries, the essence of Vienna is captured in the elegant balance between tradition, artistry, and the natural beauty of the Danube—a truly captivating setting for an exploration into European culinary traditions.

Konditorei Kormuth
Bratislava 1919
MDCCXXXV

In **Bratislava, Slovakia**, a city where pastel façades meet cobblestone charm, I visited the picturesque Konditorei Kormuth. Stepping inside felt like entering a jewel box of Baroque splendor, where walls were hand-painted with historical scenes and cakes were presented like treasures. I sipped Viennese coffee and, naturally, sampled one of everything on the menu. The blueberry cake was my favorite—its deep violet layers nestled between whipped cream and soft sponge, each bite bursting with fruit and just a hint of citrus. A delicate Dobos torte and a slice of creamy *Kardinál Schnitte* completed the lineup, each pastry as ornate and satisfying as the next.

SLOVAKIAN FILLED CRESCENTS

Makes 12 pastries

These pastries bring a piece of the Danube River region's baking heritage right to your kitchen. In Slovakia, as well as other countries along the Danube, poppy seeds are a beloved ingredient, offering both rich texture and a subtly nutty flavor that pairs beautifully with the lightly sweet dough. The dough itself, enriched with egg yolks, butter, and vanilla, is tender and soft, and the filling—made from finely ground poppy seeds, vanilla, and butter—provides a satisfying contrast of sweetness and depth. Though the shaping of these crescents requires a bit of patience, the result is a flaky, golden pastry that perfectly balances richness and lightness.

Dough:
3 to 3¼ cups (376 to 407 grams) all-purpose flour, plus more for dusting
⅓ cup (40 grams) confectioners' sugar
2½ teaspoons (4.5 grams) kosher salt
1 teaspoon (3 grams) instant yeast
¾ cup plus 1 tablespoon (195 grams) whole milk
⅓ cup (76 grams) unsalted butter
2 large egg yolks (37 grams), room temperature
1 teaspoon (4 grams) vanilla extract

Filling:
1 cup (120 grams) confectioners' sugar
¾ cup (180 grams) whole milk
1¼ cups (154 grams) poppy seeds, very finely ground (see Note)
2 tablespoons (28 grams) unsalted butter
1 tablespoon (13 grams) vanilla extract
½ teaspoon (1.5 grams) kosher salt

1 large egg (50 grams), room temperature
1 tablespoon (15 grams) water

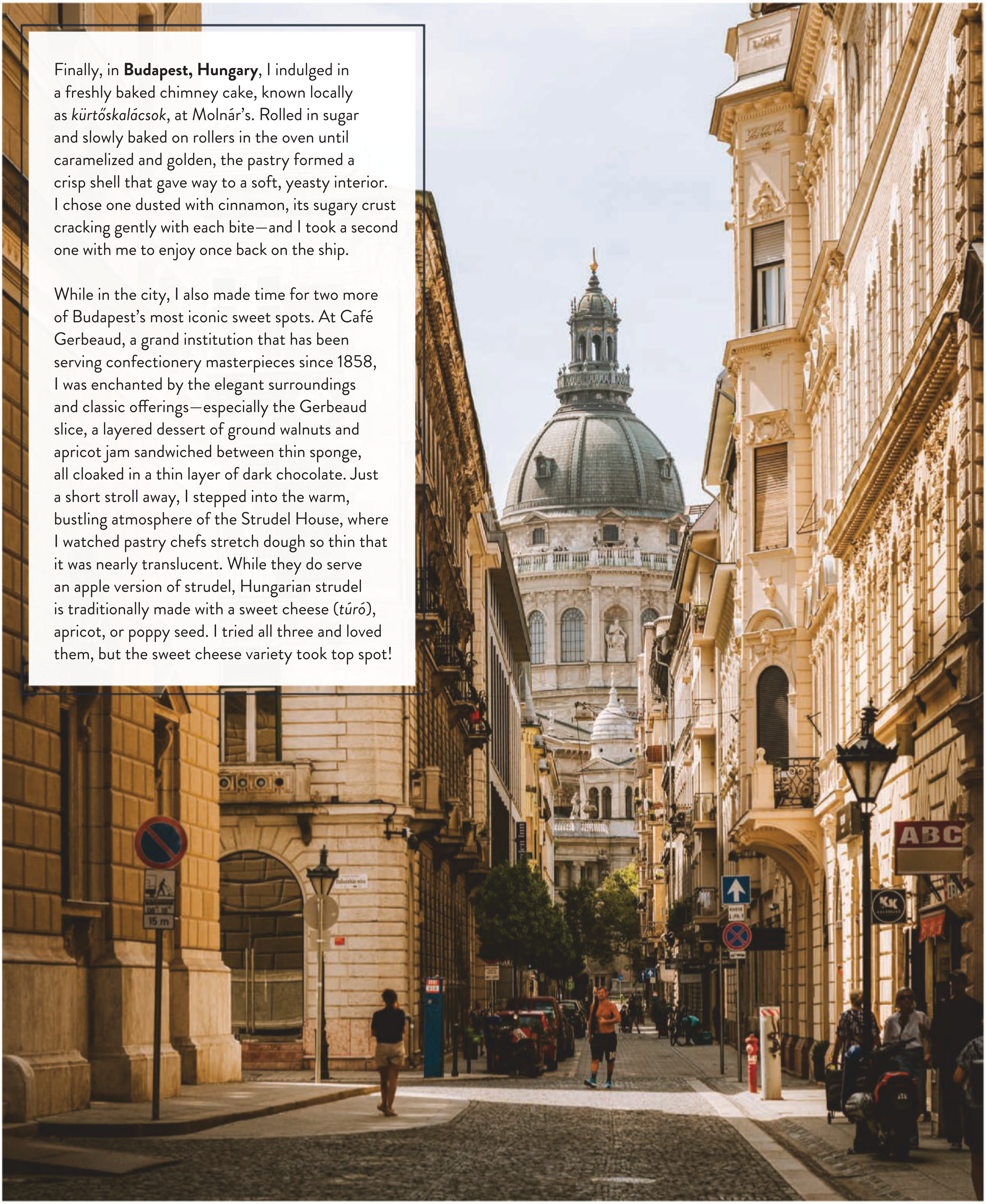
1. For dough: In the bowl of a stand mixer, whisk together 1½ cups (188 grams) flour, confectioners' sugar, salt, and yeast by hand.
2. In a small saucepan, heat milk and butter over medium heat until an instant-read thermometer registers 120°F (49°C) to 130°F (54°C). Add warm milk mixture to flour mixture; using the paddle attachment, beat at medium speed until combined. Beat in egg yolks until combined. With mixer on low speed, gradually add 1½ cups (188 grams) flour, beating just until a shaggy dough forms.
3. Switch to the dough hook attachment. Beat at low speed until a soft, somewhat sticky dough forms, 10 to 12 minutes, stopping to scrape dough hook and sides of bowl; add up to remaining ¼ cup (31 grams) flour, 1 tablespoon (8 grams) at a time, if dough is too sticky. Cover and let stand in a warm, draft-free place (75°F/24°C) until doubled in size, 1 to 1½ hours.
4. For filling: In a medium saucepan, heat confectioners' sugar and milk over medium-high heat, whisking constantly, until well combined and mixture comes to a boil, 4 to 5 minutes. Stir in poppy seeds, and cook, whisking occasionally, for 3 to 4 minutes. Remove from heat, and stir in butter, vanilla, and salt. Transfer to a heatproof bowl, and cover with plastic wrap. Let cool completely.
5. Preheat oven to 350°F (180°C). Line large baking sheets with parchment paper.
6. Lightly punch down dough, and divide in half. On a lightly floured surface, roll half of dough into a 16x13-inch rectangle (about ⅛ inch thick); trim ½ inch off all sides. With one short side closest to you, cut dough into 6x5-inch rectangles. Repeat procedure with remaining dough.
7. In a small bowl, whisk together egg and 1 tablespoon (15 grams) water.
8. Transfer filling to a pastry bag fitted with a large round piping tip (Ateco #806). Pipe 2 tablespoons (about 28 grams) filling in a straight line onto one long side of each dough rectangle, leaving a ¼-inch border on both shorter sides. Using a pastry brush, brush egg wash onto edges of dough. Roll up each dough into a log, and pinch edges to seal. Starting from slightly off center, gently roll log to 10 to 12 inches long, tapering the edges to thin them out. Shape into a crescent, and place, seam side down, on prepared pan. Brush with egg wash.
9. Bake until golden brown, 15 to 20 minutes. Let cool on pan for 10 minutes. Remove from pan, and let cool completely on a wire rack. Store in an airtight container for up to 3 days.

Note: *A spice grinder or mortar and pestle is needed for grinding the poppy seeds; they are too small to make sufficient contact with the blades of a blender or food processor.*

STRUDEL HOUSE
BUDAPEST

Finally, in **Budapest, Hungary**, I indulged in a freshly baked chimney cake, known locally as *kürtőskalácsok*, at Molnár's. Rolled in sugar and slowly baked on rollers in the oven until caramelized and golden, the pastry formed a crisp shell that gave way to a soft, yeasty interior. I chose one dusted with cinnamon, its sugary crust cracking gently with each bite—and I took a second one with me to enjoy once back on the ship.

While in the city, I also made time for two more of Budapest's most iconic sweet spots. At Café Gerbeaud, a grand institution that has been serving confectionery masterpieces since 1858, I was enchanted by the elegant surroundings and classic offerings—especially the Gerbeaud slice, a layered dessert of ground walnuts and apricot jam sandwiched between thin sponge, all cloaked in a thin layer of dark chocolate. Just a short stroll away, I stepped into the warm, bustling atmosphere of the Strudel House, where I watched pastry chefs stretch dough so thin that it was nearly translucent. While they do serve an apple version of strudel, Hungarian strudel is traditionally made with a sweet cheese (*túró*), apricot, or poppy seed. I tried all three and loved them, but the sweet cheese variety took top spot!



ON THE ITINERARY

Bäckerei Arthur Grimm
grimm.at

Café-Braun
cafe-braun.at

Café Gerbeaud
gerbeaud.hu/en

Hotel Sacher
sacher.com/en

Konditorei Jindrak
jindrak.at

Konditorei Kormuth
konditoreikormuth.sk

Lamahof
farmholidays.com/en/accommodations/weixlbaumer

Molnár's Kürtőskalács
kurtoskalacs.com/en

Simon Confiserie
simon-passau.com/en

Strudel House
reteshaz.com

Wachauer
Safranmanufaktur
wachauer-safran.at

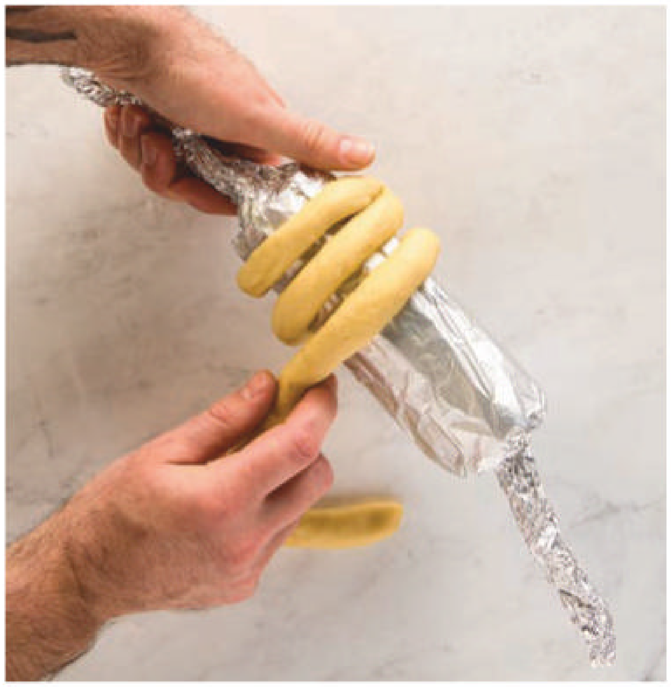
HUNGARIAN CHIMNEY CAKES

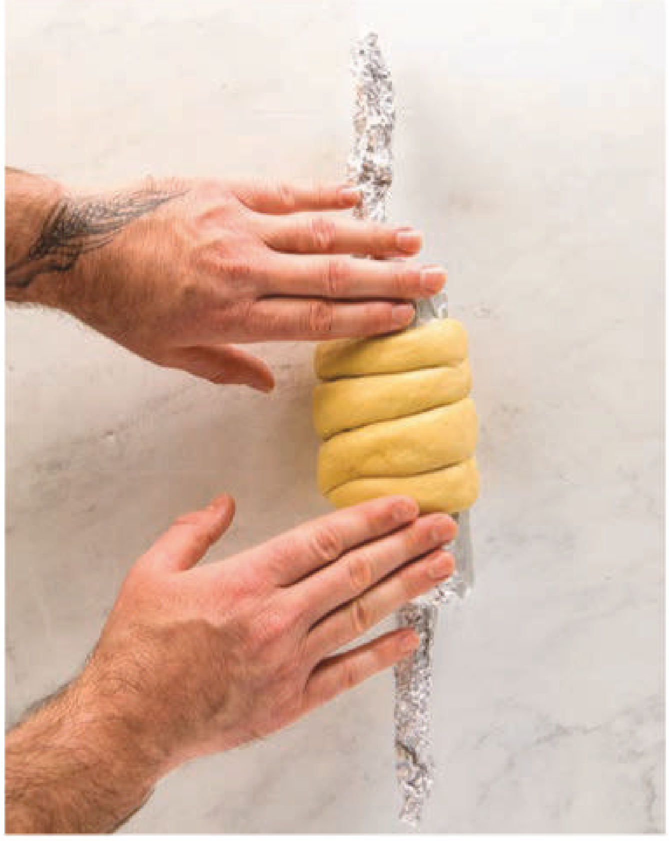
Makes 5 cakes

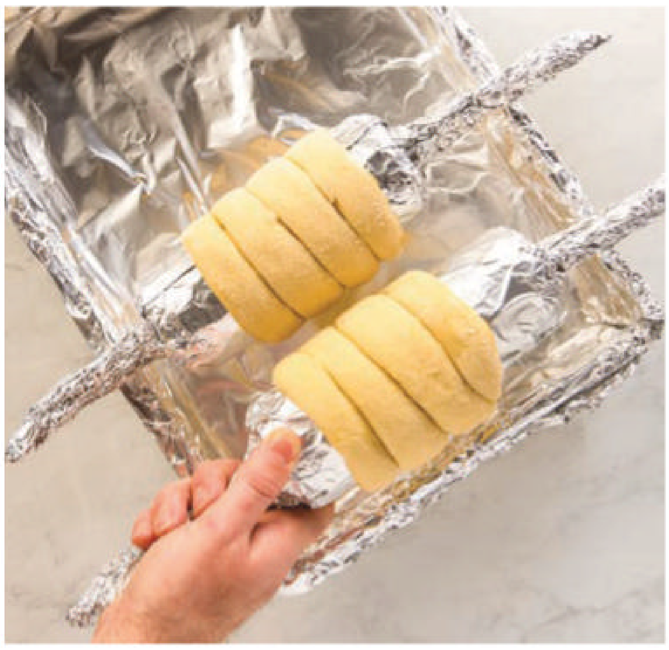
A street food classic with a theatrical flourish, chimney cakes (or kürtőskalács) are coiled, caramelized perfection. Originating in Transylvania and now a staple of Hungarian markets, these spiraled pastries are cooked over an open flame, creating a crisp, golden crust that gives way to an airy, pillowy center. This at-home version swaps out a traditional rotisserie spit for an unexpected tool: empty soda cans wrapped in foil. The dough is rolled into long ropes, wrapped around the molds, and broiled to mimic the effect of an open fire. A final roll in cinnamon sugar seals in the crunch.

3 cups (375 grams) all-purpose flour, plus more for dusting
2 cups (400 grams) plus 2 tablespoons (24 grams) granulated sugar, divided
1 tablespoon (9 grams) instant yeast
2½ teaspoons (7.5 grams) kosher salt
¾ cup plus 1 tablespoon (195 grams) warm whole milk (120°F/49°C to 130°F/54°C)
1 large egg (50 grams), room temperature
1 teaspoon (4 grams) vanilla extract
⅓ cup (76 grams) unsalted butter, cubed and softened
5 (12-ounce) empty soda cans (see Note)
2½ teaspoons (5 grams) ground cinnamon
2 tablespoons (28 grams) unsalted butter, melted

1. In the bowl of a stand mixer, whisk together flour, 2 tablespoons (24 grams) sugar, yeast, and salt by hand. Add warm milk; using the paddle attachment, beat at low speed until combined. Add egg and vanilla, and beat just until dough comes together, stopping to scrape sides of bowl.
2. Switch to the dough hook attachment. With mixer on low speed, add softened butter, one cube at a time, beating until combined after each addition. Beat until dough is elastic and smooth, 10 to 12 minutes.
3. Spray a large bowl with cooking spray. Place dough in bowl, turning to grease top. Cover and let rise in a warm, draft-free place (75°F/24°C) until doubled in size, 30 to 45 minutes.







4. In a wide, shallow dish, place 1 cup (200 grams) sugar. In another wide, shallow dish, whisk together cinnamon and remaining 1 cup (200 grams) sugar until combined.
5. Preheat oven to high broil. Wrap each can in a large sheet of heavy-duty foil, twisting excess at each end to create handles. (It should resemble a piece of wrapped candy.) Spray wrapped cans with baking spray with flour. Line a 13x9-inch baking pan with foil, letting excess extend over sides of pan.
6. On a very lightly floured surface, gently punch down dough, and divide into 5 portions (about 142 grams each). Roll each portion into a 42-inch-long strip (about ½ inch thick). Wrap each strip of dough around prepared soda cans in a spiral, leaving about a ¼-inch gap between edges of dough. Gently roll on a clean surface to smooth dough and fill in gaps. Brush with melted butter, and roll in plain sugar. Place on prepared pan, using twisted handles to elevate dough on pan.
7. Broil, carefully turning every 1 to 2 minutes, until all sides are golden brown, 3 to 4 minutes. Let cool for 1 to 2 minutes. Roll in cinnamon sugar, and serve immediately.

Note: *Taller, narrower soda cans work better than shorter, wider cans.*

Onboard the S.S. *Maria Theresa*, the pastry chef paid homage to these regional specialties, delighting guests with an ever-changing menu of baked goods inspired by the stops along our route. Mornings began with baskets of buttery croissants and Austrian *Krapfen*—jam-filled doughnuts dusted with confectioners' sugar, their interiors pillowy and fragrant. Each evening, the dessert menu brought a new surprise—a Hungarian Dobos torte one night, a flaky Austrian *Apfelstrudel* the next, each plated with care and a flourish of whipped cream. After sailing for a week and spending time with Uniworld pastry chef Ciprian Ghițulescu, he invited me to watch as he assembled the Austrian-style Apfelstrudel, a true masterpiece that I was lucky enough to enjoy fresh, in my bed watching the world go by.

As the Danube carried us through medieval towns, vineyard-laced valleys, and imperial capitals, it became clear that the story of central Europe's culinary traditions is as layered as the pastries themselves. The combination of centuries-old techniques, cultural influences, and local ingredients creates something uniquely rich and deeply satisfying. Whether enjoyed in a grand Viennese café or in the gentle glow of the dining room of the S.S. *Maria Theresa*, each sweet bite was a taste of history, tradition, and pure indulgence.

This journey was more than just a cruise—it was a feast for the senses, a voyage through time and taste. As I savored my last bite of chimney cake while the ship glided just outside the city for disembarkation under a watercolor sky, I knew that the flavors of the Danube would linger with me long after the voyage had ended.

AUSTRIAN APPLE STRUDEL

Makes 2 (12-inch) strudels

Recipe adapted from Uniworld Boutique River Cruises Pastry Chef

The Viennese strudel, also known as Apfelstrudel, is a beloved pastry in many of the European countries that once belonged to the Austro-Hungarian Empire. This Austrian dessert is known for its many layers of thin dough that transform into a flaky, buttery crust once baked. Imagine a rolled version of an apple pie, but with a heartier filling consisting of apples, chopped nuts, bread crumbs, rum, raisins, and cinnamon. Toasting the bread crumbs in a skillet with butter adds a wonderfully rich depth of flavor but also allows the bread to both soak up extra liquid and thicken the filling. Serve this delectable pastry with a light dusting of confectioners' sugar.

Dough:
2 cups (300 grams) bread flour
¼ teaspoon kosher salt
½ cup plus 2 tablespoons (150 grams) water
2 tablespoons (30 ml) neutral oil
1 large egg yolk (19 grams)

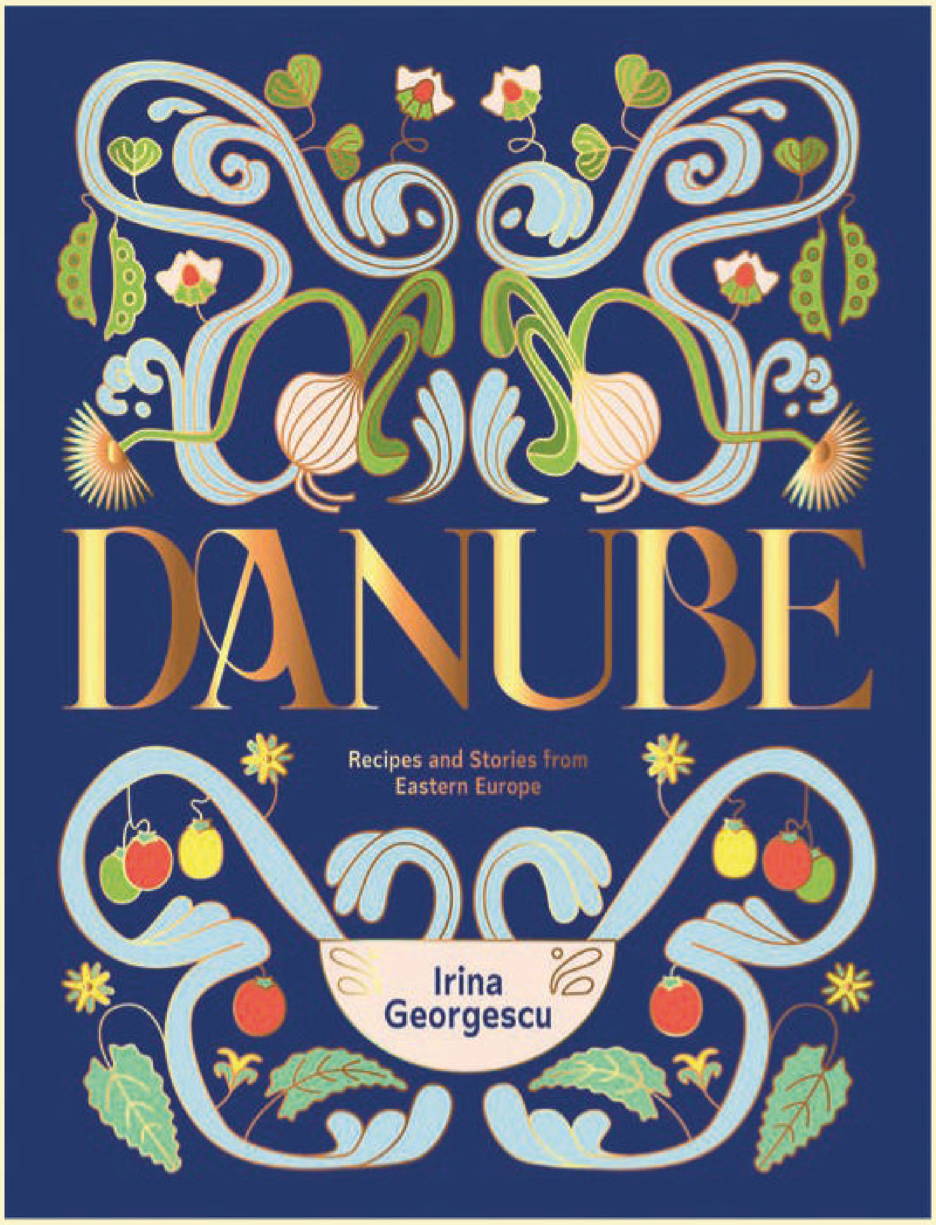
Filling:
4 large Granny Smith apples (about 1,100 grams), peeled, cored, and chopped
½ cup (65 grams) white bread crumbs, roasted in butter
½ cup (60 grams) chopped nuts (walnuts, pecans, or your choice)
⅓ cup (66 grams) granulated sugar
¼ cup (40 grams) raisins
2 teaspoons (10 grams) rum
1 teaspoon (5 grams) fresh lemon juice
¼ teaspoon ground cinnamon
⅓ cup (70 grams) unsalted butter, melted

Garnish: confectioners' sugar

1. For dough: In a medium bowl, whisk together flour and salt. Add water, oil, and egg yolk, stirring until a shaggy dough forms. Turn out onto a clean surface, and knead until dough is smooth and elastic. Shape into a ball, return to bowl, and cover with plastic wrap. Let rest at room temperature for about 1 hour.
2. Preheat oven to 400°F (200°C). Line a large rimmed baking sheet with parchment paper.
3. For filling: Mix apples with all the remaining filling ingredients except melted butter.
4. Divide dough in half; cover one portion with plastic wrap. On a linen towel or large sheet of parchment paper, gently stretch remaining portion of dough until it's very thin and approximately 18x12 inches, with one short side facing you.
5. Brush melted butter onto dough, then top with half the filling (about 4½ cups or 562 grams) along the short side closest to you, leaving at least a 1-inch border around edges. Using the towel or parchment to help, roll up dough with filling into a log. Gently transfer to prepared pan. Repeat with remaining dough and filling. Brush melted butter onto top of both logs.
6. Bake until golden brown, about 25 minutes. Let cool on pan for 10 minutes. Dust with confectioners' sugar, and serve warm. Store in an airtight container for up to 3 days.

Note: *If you prefer less filling in your strudel, use just 3 large apples.*

TASTES OF THE DANUBE


DANUBE
Recipes and Stories from Eastern Europe
Irina Georgescu

James Beard Award-winning author Irina Georgescu shares how her journey along the Danube River shaped her latest cookbook, revealing the deep cultural ties between food, family, and the land from Romania to Bulgaria

BY AMBER WILSON
PHOTOGRAPHY BY ISSY CROCKER

In *Danube*, you take us on a journey through Romania, Serbia, and Bulgaria, places that shaped your early experiences. How does your personal connection to these regions influence the way you tell their culinary stories in the book?

Irina Georgescu: I grew up in Bucharest, the capital of Romania, which happens to be in the south, where the Danube River and its tributaries dominate the landscape. My grandfather's ancestral lands were also in the south, in the Oltenia region. As I began writing about these places, I realized just how much I knew about them—from the family conversations and meals we prepared at home to the holidays spent at the Black Sea and in the Danube Delta. However, I also became more aware of the ethnic diversity in these regions, a diversity that has often been suppressed or overlooked in the past. Romania is one of the most ethnically diverse countries in Europe, yet prior to the fall of the Communist regime nearly 40 years ago, this diversity was largely unknown to many of us. Therefore, I wanted to focus on the diversity story that we are finally allowed to celebrate. I followed the Danube River to tell the story of the people living along its banks, feeling as though I was tracing my family's narrative while simultaneously recounting the shared and complex history of three neighboring countries in eastern Europe.

Your book is filled with recipes that are both accessible and full of bold yet understated flavors. Is there a particular dish or ingredient in *Danube* that holds a special place in your heart, or one you're especially excited for readers to make at home? What makes it stand out to you?

IG: If there is one ingredient that stands out in the book and needs to be celebrated, it's the leek. It's also an incredible coincidence that brings together two important aspects of my life: my grandfather's story and my home in Wales, UK. They are both connected by this culinary symbol, the leek, a vegetable introduced by the Roman Empire and that now defines both Oltenia in southern Romania and Wales in the UK. Both regions are at the opposite fringes of the ancient Roman Empire and yet connected by a culinary symbol: the leek. So, you'll find leeks everywhere in the book: with eggs for breakfast, in a stew with tomatoes and olives, in a pilaf dish with fish, and in pies. This is the revelation of the book and the underrated ingredient that brings bags of flavour to dishes. It's the mild sweetness of the white bottoms that's so delightful in recipes where ingredients are delicate and creamy, but it's also the bold flavour of the green tops, used often in stocks, that add depth and color. As you said, understated flavours and ingredients that I hope will prove these cuisines are not too dissimilar to those in the West.

The Danube is a river that flows through several countries, each with its own unique culinary identity. How did you navigate the challenge of representing the diversity of these regions while keeping the recipes cohesive and true to the river's shared influence?

IG: The river flows through or borders 10 countries, starting in central Europe and ending in eastern Europe, where it joins the Black Sea on Romania's territory. My research started with the river entering Romania along the border with Serbia and Bulgaria, where I considered it officially in eastern Europe. These are incredibly diverse lands, so you'll notice at the beginning of the book (and journey) that I talk about Czech communities, then Serbian, before moving into a magical region known as Oltenia and heading east toward numerous Bulgarian communities.

Just before it reaches the Black Sea, the river is forced to go north to avoid the oldest mountains in eastern Europe, a region now called Dobrogea. Here, you find a small reflection of Central Asia, featuring Turkish and Crimean Tatar communities, as well as Russian Old Believers and Ukrainians. I explored their everyday dishes and meal routines, selecting recipes that were representative and fitted within the book's structure. At the start of a conversation, everyone wishes to impress, so they are likely to mention festive dishes that inevitably contain meat, whereas the everyday dishes do not. I didn't want to focus on wedding menus but rather on the everyday pies and pastries, the bread and noodles so lovingly made at home, the soups and pickles. In this manner, I discovered how people eat at home. The Danube and the climate along the banks in eastern Europe create an abundance of vegetables, pulses [the dried seeds of legumes], and fruit that inspire similar cuisines. I chose the simplest, most straightforward dishes that people rely on and turn to repeatedly. This principle brought the book together, just like the river flows through people's lives and connects their story.

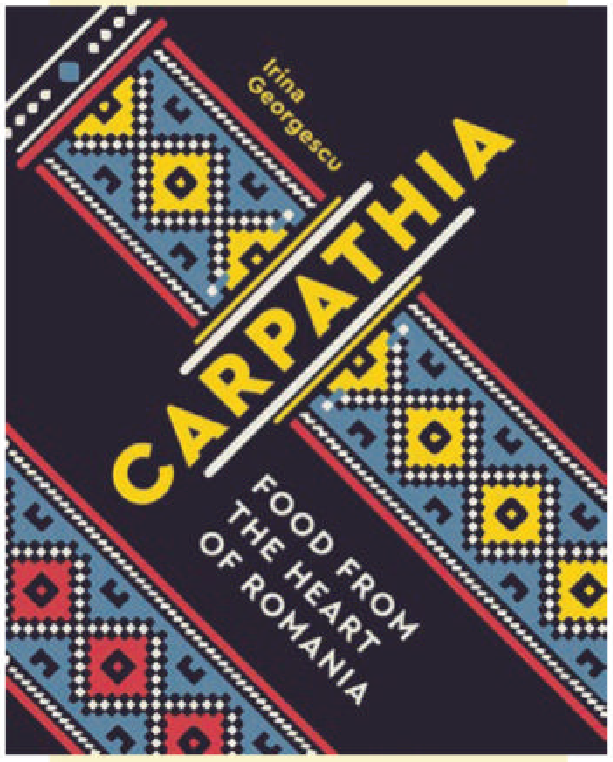
In *Danube*, you bring attention to dishes that might be lesser known but are incredibly important to local culture. Were there any recipes you felt strongly about including because they represent a piece of history or a local tradition you wanted to share with readers?

IG: Certainly. While these cuisines reflect cultural exchanges spanning millennia, they also embody the sense of togetherness and identity that people cherish today. I write to make the dishes and people who prepare them more visible in the US. For instance, the Kurban festivity is typically represented by a roast lamb in Romania and its Greek communities, as well as in the Balkans and the Muslim world. However, in Bulgaria, it is a soup. I find the nourishing, comforting idea of the soup more appealing and achievable in a home kitchen while still embodying the essential meaning of the tradition. Tatar pies are baked at home in large trays, but in bakeries, they are crafted as individual pastries for convenience, allowing them to be eaten on the go. I wanted to include these changes in the book and show how practical yet traditional people are. The Tulcea Baklava, surely not the easiest recipe to follow, is in the book for its special significance within the Turkish (and Tatar) communities in a particular town along the Danube, as women come together to pass on their skills to younger generations. Of course, the Oltenian bread is extraordinary, yet clearly regional, closely linked to the traditional baking cloche. I provided a home version that can be made in a standard oven, and while the results are similar, as is often the case with recipes like this, the historical context is vital. I felt I couldn't write a book about southern Romania without featuring this famous bread.

Given your roots in Bucharest and your experiences living in the UK, how did your understanding of eastern European food

evolve, and how does *Danube* reflect that shift, particularly in terms of nostalgia and connection to home?

IG: My perspective on eastern European cuisine evolved on a theoretical level: I began to understand it in a broader historical context. The events that unfolded in these regions, including numerous wars, displacements, and beginnings, have all influenced what we see in today's cuisine. Why is strudel so popular in eastern Europe? Why do we enjoy dumplings or bake noodle pudding? These were questions I needed to reflect on and explore. Consequently, my view of eastern European dishes has broadened. The recipes in my books connect with a Western audience, helping them to discover the comforting elements of these cuisines while also enjoying their unique flavours. Interestingly, East or West, we all share a fondness for potatoes, noodles, dairy, apples, walnuts, and herbs, so my recipes remain quite faithful to the originals. Regarding nostalgia and my connection to home, my British friends had to adapt to my culinary quirks: I prefer fish and chips served with gherkins instead of mushy peas. I serve pies cold as snacks and eat cheese with red onions as appetizers rather than for dessert with fruit.



Eastern European Baking and Desserts from Romania and Beyond
TAVA
Irina Georgescu

➔ Find Irina on Instagram at @irina.r.georgescu and on her site, *irinageorgescu.com*. She is the author of *Carpathia: Food from the Heart of Romania* (2020); James Beard Award-winning *Tava: Eastern European Baking and Desserts from Romania & Beyond* (2022); and *Danube: Recipes and Stories from Eastern Europe* (2024).

I pair meat with fermented tomatoes rather than cranberry sauce, and I dip bread in garlic vinaigrette instead of spreading it with garlic butter.

Your book captures not just the food of the Danube but its people and landscapes. Is there a particular moment or memory of the river itself that stands out to you? How does the river tie into your understanding of food as something that connects people to the land?

IG: What impressed me the most was the story of Ada Kaleh. This island, located between Romania and Serbia on the Danube River, was home to a Turkish community. It looked like a time capsule of the former Ottoman Empire, in terms of language and traditions. This occurred up until the 1970s, 50 years after the collapse of the empire. Unfortunately, the island was submerged to make the Danube more navigable, taking with it the minarets, houses, rose gardens, fig orchards, and cobbled lanes. While Turkish people had the opportunity to reunite with their families in Turkey, many chose to remain in Romania. Their story, still entwined with the Danube and the Black Sea, echoes along the riverbanks, a narrative of home. These lands, where the river influences farming, agriculture, and fishing, offer a way of life to numerous resilient ethnicities. Their cuisine reflects not a nomadic existence but a deep-rooted way of cooking at home. It is a cuisine of permanence, embracing practices of growing vegetables, agriculture, grain milling, slow cooking, baking, and preserving.

What do you hope readers take away as the essence of cooking and baking from *Danube*, and how does it embody the connections you've found between the food, the land, and your own personal journey?

IG: I would like readers to see in *Danube* the practicality of everyday life, the swiftness—much like the river's—with which many recipes are prepared, the accessibility of ingredients, and people's ingenuity and sense of humor. *Danube* celebrates food and life and belonging.

I also hope my readers will gain a better understanding of this part of eastern Europe. Despite having published three books on the subject, I still sense that it feels somewhat distant to many people in the West, almost like the Iron Curtain is still separating us. Although it has been nearly 40 years since its fall, many remain unaware of what lies beyond it. Plus, a lot of smaller, independent countries have emerged in the meantime, which makes things even more confusing. But here it is. This is what you can discover: remarkable stories from the dawn of time to the present day. I often say "from ancestors to descendants." I lift the veil so my readers can journey along the river and through the lands, meeting the people who inhabit these areas. I want them to exclaim, "I had no idea the Danube flowed through such beautiful regions" or "I had no idea Romania's name originated from the Roman Empire that once ruled over these lands." "I had no idea that in Serbia, just across the river from Romania, there was a 13,000-year-old settlement and culture you can visit today at Lepenski Vir." This is old Europe, where you will discover more archaeology from the dawn of time than you ever expected.

Is there a particular recipe in *Danube* that holds a special place in your heart, or one you're especially excited for readers to make at home? What makes it stand out to you?

IG: It must be the cornbread with horseradish. I mention in the book that there is no meal in Romania without cornmeal, and this is an intriguing recipe. It's made with yeast, allowing the batter to ferment before baking. I believe it will be a revelation for many bakers. In Romania, there is a tradition of baking on leaves; for instance, in Transylvania, potato bread is baked on cabbage leaves, while corn cakes are baked on horseradish leaves in southern Romania. The leaves impart flavour to the cakes, and I wanted to re-create this at home by adding creamed horseradish to the batter. I think people should prepare this cornbread before any other baking recipe.

SF. ELENA LIVENCI
St. Helena Yeasted Pancakes with Poppy Seeds

Serves 4

Recipe excerpted from *Danube: Recipes and Stories from Eastern Europe* by Irina Georgescu © 2024. Published by Quadrille. Photographs © Issy Croker.

When I visited the Czech ethnic villages in Romania, I stayed for one night in St. Helena, or Svatá Helena as the locals call it. The winding road climbing up to it offered one of the most spectacular views of the Danube. For breakfast, my host showed me how to prepare these pancakes made with yeasted batter. She made them quite thin and topped them with poppy seeds, an important ingredient in the area, cooked in milk with honey.

150 grams (5 ounces/1¼ cups) plain (all-purpose) flour
15 grams (½ ounce/1 tablespoon) caster (superfine) sugar
7 grams (1 sachet) fast-action dried yeast
1 medium egg [47 grams]
135 ml (4½ ounces/generous ½ cup) full-fat milk
1 pinch of salt
Sunflower or vegetable oil, for frying

For the Topping:
25 grams (1 ounce) unsalted butter, plus extra to serve
80 grams (3 ounces/¾ cup) poppy seeds
180 ml (6 ounces/¾ cup) full-fat milk
35 ml (1 ounce/generous 2 tablespoons) runny honey, plus extra to serve

BAKE FROM SCRATCH
RECIPE TESTING NOTES

In step 2, toast the poppy seeds on low heat. Gently simmer the milk mixture, stirring regularly. A little unabsorbed milk is fine. In step 3, cook batter in about 2-tablespoon portions for each pancake; use the back of a spoon to gently push and spread the batter to an even thickness.

1. In a large bowl, combine the flour, sugar and yeast, then make a well in the middle. In a separate bowl, beat the egg with the milk and salt. Pour the egg mixture into the well in the flour mixture and gradually mix everything together using a fork. Cover and allow to rise in a warm place for 40 minutes until it looks bubbly.
2. Make the topping by melting the butter in a small pan. Add the poppy seeds and cook until they start to release their nutty aroma. Stir in the milk and simmer gently until the mixture thickens. Take it off the heat and mix in the honey.
3. Cover the base of a frying pan (skillet) with a very thin layer of cooking oil and heat well. Use a serving or salad spoon to scoop the batter into the pan to form 2–3 pancakes. Keep the heat on medium so they don't burn, and cook for 1–2 minutes on each side. Peek under the pancakes to check if they are golden brown, then flip them onto their other sides. When cooked, remove to a plate lined with paper towel and rub some butter on top while they are still hot. Keep the plate covered with kitchen foil while you prepare the rest.
4. Serve immediately, topped with generous spoonfuls of the poppy seed topping and a good drizzle of honey.

origin of a classic

Poppy Seed Roll

From the fertile fields along the Danube to the tables of central Europe, poppy seed rolls have carried stories of trade, tradition, and celebration for centuries

BY AMBER WILSON / PHOTOGRAPHY BY STEPHANIE WELBOURNE STEELE
RECIPE DEVELOPMENT BY AMANDA STABILE / FOOD AND PROP STYLING BY AARON CONRAD

The Danube River moves at its own pace. Wide and slow in some places, rushing in others, it carves through 10 countries, linking cities and villages, languages and histories, before emptying itself into the Black Sea. It carries with it fragments of the past—whispers of empires, of merchants trading spices and silks, of bakers rolling out dough in warm kitchens, their hands dusted with flour, the air thick with the scent of yeast and toasted poppy seeds.

Along its banks, where the land is rich and fertile, fields of poppies sway in the breeze. The seeds, so small yet so full of meaning, have been harvested here for centuries, ground into rich pastes, sweetened with honey, stirred into cakes, folded into pastries. To make a poppy seed roll—*makovník* in Slovakia, *mákos bejgli* in Hungary, *makowiec* in Poland, and numerous other names and variations throughout central and eastern Europe—is to take part in something old and unchanging, a tradition carried forward in flour and sugar, in the careful spreading of filling, in the tight rolling of dough.

The history of the poppy seed roll is tangled in the region's past, shaped by shifting borders, waves of migration, and the influence of empires. Some trace its roots to the Ottomans, who ruled parts of central Europe for more than a century, introducing filled pastries that may have inspired later variations. They brought with them *börek*—a rolled and filled pastry made with thin layers of dough. Over time, local bakers transformed the concept, swapping the flaky pastry for a softer, yeasted dough, filling it with the ingredients they knew best. The Austro-Hungarian Empire further spread the tradition, as recipes traveled from noble kitchens to humble farmhouses, each region adding its own touch.

By the 19th century, poppy seed rolls had become firmly embedded in central European baking culture. They appeared in cookbooks and on holiday tables, particularly at Christmas and Easter, their dark, spiraled filling a familiar sight among the feasts of winter and spring. The poppy seed, once a staple of ancient diets, took on layers of symbolism—prosperity, fertility, even protection against misfortune.

But while poppy seed rolls became closely tied to festive traditions, they were never entirely reserved for holidays. Home bakers often made them to use up stores of flour and butter, bakers would sell them in markets as an everyday indulgence, and travelers along the Danube—sailors, traders, scholars moving between cities—would tuck thick slices into their bags, a filling, homey comfort that lasted for days.

Poppy seed rolls belong to no single country, yet each place along the Danube has made them its own. In Slovakia and the Czech Republic, *makovník* is often served thickly sliced, the poppy seed filling so dark that it looks almost black, the dough tender and barely sweet. In Hungary, *bejgli* is baked in long, slender logs, brushed with an egg wash to create a crackled glaze. In Austria, *Mohnstrudel* takes on a looser roll, more strudel than bread, sometimes studded with apples or a whisper of cinnamon. In Serbia, *štrudla sa makom* is slightly richer, more buttery, meant to be savored slowly.

And always, the poppy seeds carry their own quiet significance. They are symbols of abundance, of renewal, of history itself. The seeds were cultivated in this region long before it was mapped into nations, before there were borders to cross. Ancient Greeks and Romans prized them for their medicinal properties, and medieval monks used them in spiced pastes to fill their fasting breads. The poppies continued to bloom through war and peace, through empire and independence, feeding generations of bakers who shaped them into something more than just an ingredient.

There is a rhythm to making it: the patience of waiting for the dough to rise; the spreading of the poppy seed filling, even and smooth; the rolling—tight but not too tight—so the swirl remains intact; the baking, watching, waiting for the crust to turn just the right shade of brown; the way the scent fills the house and lingers long after the oven has been turned off.

And then there is the eating: a slice, cut thick or thin depending on preference; a cup of coffee, dark and strong; a moment of pause, of looking out at the river, at the land beyond; a taste of something that has been made and remade for centuries, that will continue to be made as long as hands knead dough and fields of poppies bloom along the banks of the Danube.

POPPY SEED ROLL

Makes 2 (12-inch) loaves

Thought to have been influenced by Turkish and Austrian pastries, the poppy seed roll became a staple in households across Hungary, Slovakia, and other Danube River countries. The defining feature? A uniform spiral of filling wrapped in a beautiful golden crust. This version leans into the traditional poppy seed filling, a nod to its deep cultural significance. But what really makes it shine is the technique: Whipping the egg whites separately aerates the filling, keeping it from becoming too dense, and loosely wrapping the dough in parchment during baking controls its expansion, ensuring the signature swirl stays intact. A simple sugar glaze adds just the right amount of sweetness. The result is a pastry that feels both deeply nostalgic and undeniably refined.

Dough:

1	cup (240 grams) warm whole milk (110°F/43°C to 115°F/46°C)
½	cup (100 grams) plus 1 tablespoon (12 grams) granulated sugar, divided
1	tablespoon (9 grams) active dry yeast*
3¾	cups (469 grams) all-purpose flour, plus more for dusting
1	tablespoon (9 grams) kosher salt
¼	cup (57 grams) unsalted butter, melted
2	large egg yolks (37 grams), room temperature

Filling:

2	cups (280 grams) poppy seeds
⅓	cup (32 grams) almond flour
⅔	cup (133 grams) granulated sugar
¼	cup (60 grams) whole milk
1½	tablespoons (7 grams) orange zest
2	large egg whites (60 grams), room temperature

Glaze:

1	cup (120 grams) confectioners' sugar
1½	tablespoons (22.5 grams) water

Garnish: poppy seeds

1. For dough: In a small bowl, whisk together warm milk, 1 tablespoon (12 grams) granulated sugar, and yeast. Let stand until foamy, about 5 minutes.
2. In the bowl of a stand mixer, stir together all-purpose flour, salt, and remaining ½ cup (100 grams) granulated sugar by hand until combined. Add yeast mixture, melted butter, and egg yolks; using the paddle attachment, beat at low speed until combined. Switch to the dough hook attachment, and beat at medium-low speed until a smooth, elastic, and slightly tacky dough forms, 6 to 8 minutes.
3. Lightly spray a large bowl with cooking spray. Place dough in bowl, turning to grease top. Cover and let rise in a warm, draft-free place (75°F/24°C) until doubled in size, 1 to 1½ hours.
4. Preheat oven to 325°F (170°C). Line a rimmed baking sheet with parchment paper.
5. For filling: In a medium bowl, whisk together poppy seeds and almond flour.
6. In a medium saucepan, heat granulated sugar, milk, and orange zest over medium heat, stirring occasionally, until sugar dissolves and mixture just begins to simmer. (Do not boil.) Remove from heat; stir in poppy seed mixture until combined. (Mixture may appear dry or sandy.) Let cool completely. (See Note.)
7. In the bowl of a stand mixer fitted with the whisk attachment, beat egg whites at medium-high speed until stiff peaks form, 3 to 5 minutes. Fold egg whites into poppy seed mixture until combined.
8. Punch down dough. Very lightly dust work surface with all-purpose flour; turn out dough onto prepared surface, and divide in half. Roll half of dough into a 12x9-inch rectangle, with one long side closest to you. Spread half of filling (about 1 cup or 285 grams) onto dough, leaving a ¼-inch border on both short sides and one long side. Starting with long side opposite border, roll up dough into a log, pinching and tucking ends to seal. Place log, seam side down, on parchment paper, and loosely wrap parchment around dough, leaving about ¼ inch of space around top and sides of log. Place on prepared pan. Repeat with remaining dough and remaining filling.
9. Bake for 30 minutes. Discard parchment from around logs, and bake until golden brown and an instant-read thermometer inserted in center registers at least 190°F (88°C), 15 to 20 minutes more. Let cool on pan for 10 minutes. Remove from pan, and let cool completely on a wire rack.
10. For glaze: In another medium bowl, whisk together confectioners' sugar and 1½ tablespoons (22.5 grams) water. Pour onto loaves. Garnish with poppy seeds, if desired. Let stand until glaze is set, about 15 minutes. Refrigerate in an airtight container for up to 3 days.

**We used Red Star® Active Dry Yeast.*

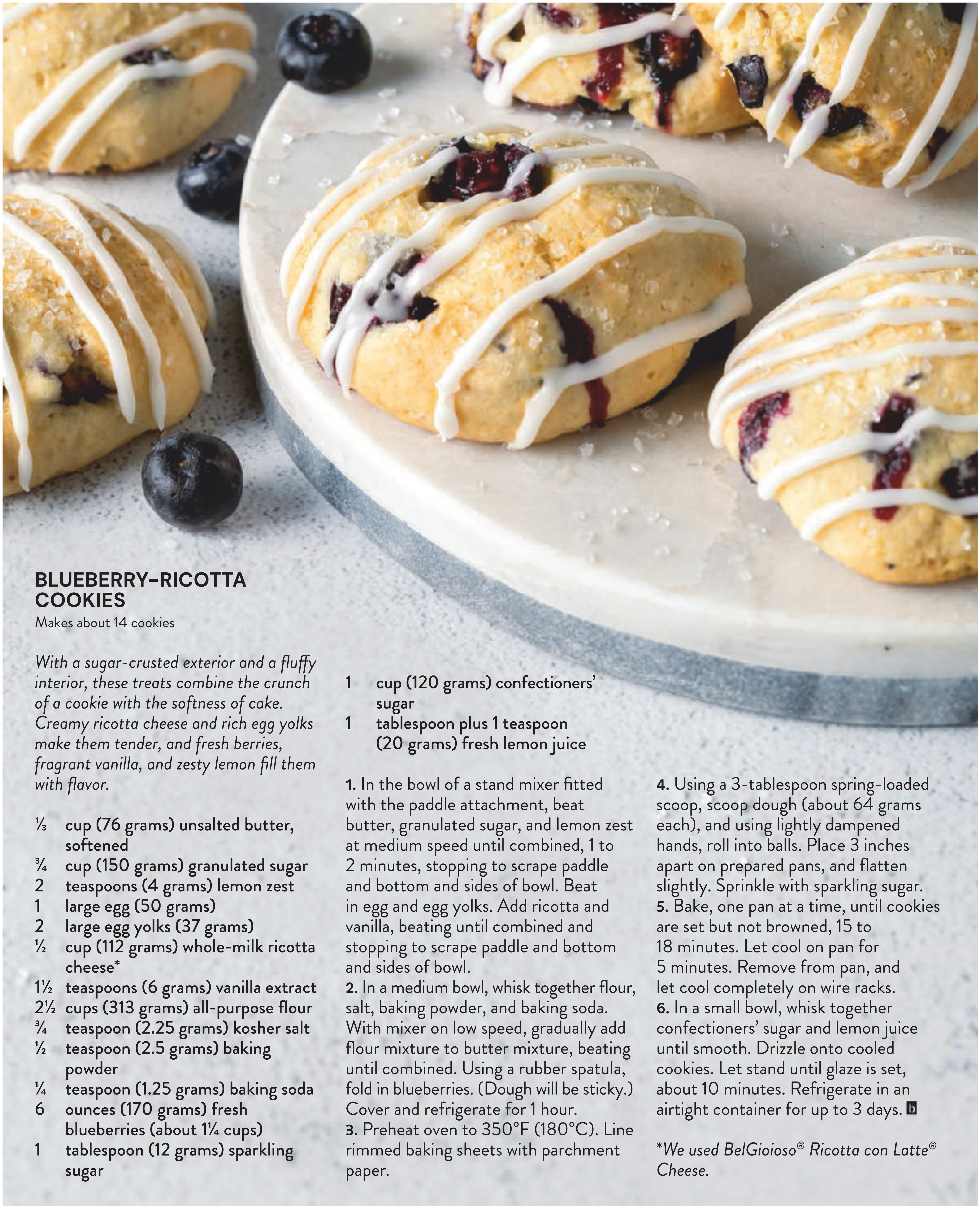
Note: *The filling can be refrigerated overnight without the egg whites, which are added in step 7. Let the cold filling come to room temperature before adding the beaten egg whites and then use the filling immediately.*

PRO TIP: *Baked unglazed loaves can be wrapped tightly in plastic wrap and frozen for up to 3 months. Let them thaw in the refrigerator before glazing.*

COOKIE *meets* CAKE

These berry-filled treats combine the best of both worlds

RECIPE DEVELOPMENT BY OLA AGBODZA
FOOD STYLING BY AARON CONRAD



BLUEBERRY-RICOTTA COOKIES

Makes about 14 cookies

With a sugar-crusted exterior and a fluffy interior, these treats combine the crunch of a cookie with the softness of cake. Creamy ricotta cheese and rich egg yolks make them tender, and fresh berries, fragrant vanilla, and zesty lemon fill them with flavor.

⅓ cup (76 grams) unsalted butter, softened
¾ cup (150 grams) granulated sugar
2 teaspoons (4 grams) lemon zest
1 large egg (50 grams)
2 large egg yolks (37 grams)
½ cup (112 grams) whole-milk ricotta cheese*
1½ teaspoons (6 grams) vanilla extract
2½ cups (313 grams) all-purpose flour
¾ teaspoon (2.25 grams) kosher salt
½ teaspoon (2.5 grams) baking powder
¼ teaspoon (1.25 grams) baking soda
6 ounces (170 grams) fresh blueberries (about 1¼ cups)
1 tablespoon (12 grams) sparkling sugar
1 cup (120 grams) confectioners' sugar
1 tablespoon plus 1 teaspoon (20 grams) fresh lemon juice

1. In the bowl of a stand mixer fitted with the paddle attachment, beat butter, granulated sugar, and lemon zest at medium speed until combined, 1 to 2 minutes, stopping to scrape paddle and bottom and sides of bowl. Beat in egg and egg yolks. Add ricotta and vanilla, beating until combined and stopping to scrape paddle and bottom and sides of bowl.

2. In a medium bowl, whisk together flour, salt, baking powder, and baking soda. With mixer on low speed, gradually add flour mixture to butter mixture, beating until combined. Using a rubber spatula, fold in blueberries. (Dough will be sticky.) Cover and refrigerate for 1 hour.

3. Preheat oven to 350°F (180°C). Line rimmed baking sheets with parchment paper.

4. Using a 3-tablespoon spring-loaded scoop, scoop dough (about 64 grams each), and using lightly dampened hands, roll into balls. Place 3 inches apart on prepared pans, and flatten slightly. Sprinkle with sparkling sugar.

5. Bake, one pan at a time, until cookies are set but not browned, 15 to 18 minutes. Let cool on pan for 5 minutes. Remove from pan, and let cool completely on wire racks.

6. In a small bowl, whisk together confectioners' sugar and lemon juice until smooth. Drizzle onto cooled cookies. Let stand until glaze is set, about 10 minutes. Refrigerate in an airtight container for up to 3 days.

**We used BelGioioso® Ricotta con Latte® Cheese.*

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brand standards

***Bake from Scratch* uses the following ingredients, equipment, and products in developing and testing all our recipes:**
European-style butter
Full-fat dairy products
Diamond Crystal kosher salt
Conventional-bake ovens
Digital thermometers and scales
KitchenAid Artisan stand mixers
Williams Sonoma Goldtouch bakeware

Although both weight and volume measurements are included, readers are strongly encouraged to measure by weight.

***Bake from Scratch* Official Test Kitchen Partners**
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credits

Page 3—Ringed bread photo by Issy Crocker.
Pages 7–8—Photography by Joann Pai.
Page 24—Edd Kimber photo by Simon Kimber.
Pages 29–32—Photography by Amanda Stabile.
Page 113—Photo by Matthew Septimus.

recipe corrections

While we aim for perfection with each of our recipes, we do make the occasional mistake. Here are recent corrections.

MARCH/APRIL 2025
***Sweet Almond Frangipane Buns**, page 25*
Butter in ingredients of frangipane should be softened.
***Strawberry Cream Filling**, page 57*
For the sheet cake, use 2 tablespoons (24 grams) sugar instead of 1 tablespoon (12 grams) in step 2.

bake FROM scratch

BAKING RETREATS

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2026 Baking Retreats will be announced soon!

For all the delicious details on these retreats and to register, email events@bakefromscratch.com.
To stay up-to-date on our baking retreat announcements, sign up for our newsletter, PreHeat!

The Best Lesson in the World for Kids: **Baking**

Find Rose on Instagram at @realbakingwithrose and at *realbakingwithrose.com*.

Baking is not only fun, engaging, and educational for children, it is something you can do together. And you get to eat the results!

BY ROSE LEVY BERANBAUM

I love children and always have. Three decades or so ago, when I was trying everything to have children of my own, my close friend and colleague Elizabeth Karmel sympathized and compassionately suggested that she would share her nephew August for me to give a class in baking cookies. He was only about 4 years old, but she said he was exceptionally bright, so I should try it. And cookies are an ideal starter for learning baking because they are more forgiving, and the small size makes it relatable. She bought him my *Rose's Christmas Cookies* book, and the class was a great success. It went on to become a yearly tradition, and soon, he was joined by his younger brothers.

I had a degree in teaching at the high school level from NYU. But the classes for those three young boys were what taught me the exceptional value of teaching baking to kids. I learned that it teaches so many essential life lessons: art, science (the value of weighing), patience, math, sharing, and love. And as extra motivation, they get to lick spatulas, eat the final results, and share them with friends. They ended up licking the spatulas so enthusiastically, they destroyed several by biting through them!

Two special teaching experiences happened a few years later when my then-8-year-old nephew Alexander arrived from San Francisco, California, to stay with me for a week. The one dictate my brother Michael imposed was that I make sure he read every day. After a few days, he called and asked if Alex was reading. "Oh, yes," was my response. "How did you get him to read?" asked my brother. My response: "All I had to do was read myself and he wanted to do whatever it was that I was doing. I didn't even have to ask him to read." He had grabbed the book he had already read several times and sat right next to me! The power of learning by example was the lesson for us grown-ups!

The second memorable lesson took place that week when I was making my dad's favorite cherry pie for his annual visit. Alex wanted to help, but I explained that my dad only gets this pie once a year and I wanted it to be perfect. Immediately, I felt bad to have discouraged Alex, so I handed him a small piece of dough with which to do whatever he pleased. After shaping it, he examined his pastry somewhat askance and resignedly said, "I guess I'm no pastry chef." That made me feel even worse, but then inspiration struck! I got out a small, fluted tart pan and told him to press the dough into it and fill it with a little of the cherry pie filling. Alex put his own touch on it, shaping a little of the dough into balls to decorate the top.

That afternoon, my dad arrived, and we had company. We were all eating the cherry pie on the porch, and I handed Alex his baked tart and a plate and told him to invert the tart onto it. He lifted off the tart pan to reveal the beautiful tart shaped by the pan. His eyes widened in surprised delight and then he did something he normally would never have done in front of company. He gave me a huge hug. Oh—I forgot to add to my list of things baking teaches kids! It is, perhaps, the most important lesson of all: empowerment and self-confidence! ■

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